

## A HIV/AIDS TIMELINE

### Emphasising the Australian / New South Wales Perspective

#### The Origins of HIV/AIDS

It is generally agreed that Simian Immunodeficiency Virus (SIV) found in African primates became Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) which causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Genotyping research, comparing different types of HIV with different types of SIV, suggests that HIV has been introduced to humans on at least 12 different occasions, once each for the 12 different types of HIV-1 and HIV-2 discovered so far.

HIV-1 is divided into 4 types - Groups M (main), O (outlier), N (new or non-M/O) and P. HIV-1 Group M, is by far the most easily transmitted and widespread form of HIV found today, being responsible for more than 99% of all HIV infections worldwide and it is the form of HIV usually intended when this document just refers to HIV. HIV-1 Group M is also further divided into 9 further subtypes or clades and there are also 48 recognised recombinant forms (made up of a mix from the genome of 2 or more of the 9 clades which are most likely the result of superinfection of individuals with multiple subtypes). Countries or risk groups can have different dominant subtypes. HIV-1 Groups O, N and P only occur in small numbers of people and are rare outside of Africa.

HIV-2 has 8 subtypes, 2 of the subtypes are common and are called Group A and B. The 6 additional subtypes, Groups C-H, have so far only been found in one person each. HIV-2 is more difficult to transmit, is less deadly and is generally found in older people living in West Africa, where HIV-2 has been shown to be associated with treatment by injection for tuberculosis, trypanosomiasis and sleeping sickness and with some rituals that allow the transfer of blood. The incidence of HIV-2 is falling and it has been theorised that it may eventually naturally die out.

It will probably never be known exactly how, when and where HIV was transmitted to humans, but the current general consensus is:

**How:** The *Natural Transfer Theory* (also *Hunter*, or *Bushmeat Theory*) is considered by most who work in HIV research to be the simplest and most plausible explanation for the cross-species transmission of HIV, whereby researchers propose SIV was transferred to humans who hunted primates for 'bushmeat' via bites, cuts or other skin damage coming into contact with blood during hunting or butchering. Monkey herpes B virus, simian foamy virus and monkeypox are examples of other simian viruses that are common in people who handle monkeys and apes. Exactly how SIV evolved into HIV following infection of a hunter or bushmeat handler is still a matter of debate, although natural selection would favour any virus capable of adjusting so that it could live in, infect and reproduce using, the cells of a human host. Interestingly, the SIV most closely related to HIV-1 Group M, is itself a blend of 2 SIVs, the 1<sup>st</sup> found in red-capped mangabeys and the 2<sup>nd</sup> found in 3 other monkey species. All are monkeys that chimps hunt and eat, and the date for the transfer to, or the combination of these viruses in, chimps is estimated to be only a few hundred years before HIV was transferred to humans.

**When:** There are many estimates of exactly when the various strains of HIV have been transferred to humans. The fact that centuries of trade in millions of African slaves introduced parasitic and viral diseases to the Caribbean and Americas did not result in an epidemic of HIV, suggests that HIV did not exist, or was extremely rare, in humans prior to the 1880s. Hunting chimpanzees, which are big and agile, became much easier with the introduction of guns, which until the 20th century were almost entirely in European hands. **The most accepted estimate for the year that HIV-1 Group M was transferred to humans is considered to be around 1921** (with a margin for error of 1908-1933). *Natural Transfer Theory* adherents suggest that HIV was limited to very small numbers of people (less than 100) until an infected individual from the Cameroon area migrated to, or visited, the densely populated twin cities of Kinshasa/Brazzaville in the Belgian and French Congo, where other factors (discussed below) then drove expanded transmission and diversification. The estimates for the next 4 most common HIV types/groups that are transmissible between humans are: HIV-2 Group A transferred around 1932 (1906-1955), HIV-2 Group B transferred around 1935 (1907-1961), HIV-1 Group O transferred around the year 1920 (1890-1940) and HIV-1 Group N transferred around 1963 (1948-1977).

**Where:** Current research suggests that HIV-1 Group M, was transferred from chimpanzees to humans somewhere in what is now the Republic of Cameroon, near the borders of the Gabonese Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Current research suggests that HIV-2, which is mostly restricted to West Africa, was transferred to humans from a related, but different, strain of SIV found in sooty mangabey monkeys somewhere in or around the Republic of Guinea-Bissau (type A) and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) (type B). It seems the other HIV subtypes were transferred at different places and times, but in similar ways from various primates, with, for example, evidence currently suggesting that HIV-1 Group O and P are more closely related to forms of SIV found in gorillas.

There are other theories and factors that most likely contributed to the early and continued spread of HIV, such as:

- ***Contaminated Needle Theory:*** Until the 1950s there was extensive reuse of glass syringes for immunisation against, and treatment of, many diseases in Africa. After 1956, disposable plastic syringes became available but are likely to still have been reused due to cost. In both cases, inadequately sterilised or un-sterilised equipment probably contributed to the spread of HIV from small groups where it existed for a long time into the general population. In colonial Africa, treatment of the native population was carried out for humanitarian reasons, but also to protect the native workforce and colonial administrators. Some patients are reported to have been given 300 or more injections during the colonial period. A number of studies by Dr Jacques Pépin (see October 2011) looking at elderly Africans showed large numbers with Hepatitis B & C and HTLV-1 (all blood borne viruses like HIV) and also other pathogens that are likely to have been transmitted by contaminated injecting equipment.

- *Colonialism Theory* (sometimes known as the *Heart of Darkness Theory*) whereby it is suggested that during the late 19th and early 20th century, when much of Africa was ruled by European colonial forces, colonial rule was particularly harsh and many people were forced into crowded labour camps and cities where people from distant tribes mixed, food was scarce (making bushmeat attractive), sanitation was poor and physical demands extreme. Colonial policy encouraged the migration of men, and discouraged the migration of women and children, to camps and cities. This led to a gender imbalance where sex work by women was tolerated or encouraged in order to keep male labourers happy. For example, in Kinshasa in 1955, there were 5.4 single men for every single woman.
- *Industrialisation and Urbanisation*. The move of people from relatively sparse rural populations towards much more densely populated centres following industrialisation certainly increases the opportunities for risk contacts for many diseases including HIV. In Central Africa for example in 1931, only 5% of the population lived in cities. In the largest city, Kinshasa, the migration driven population went from 40,000 (1931) to 220,000 (1951) then to more than 500,000 (by 1961) when this represented a third of the entire population of the Belgian Congo.
- *Sexual Liberation*. In the western world during the 1960s and 1970s the traditional attitudes and codes of behaviour relating to sexuality and interpersonal relationships underwent significant change. This included an increased acceptance of sex outside of traditional monogamous relationships. This may have been partially influenced by the availability of the contraceptive pill which substantially reduced the risk of pregnancy and may have led to a decrease in the heterosexual use of condoms and an increase in Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). In Central Africa, where HIV originated and STIs were common, sex work became destigmatised, as it was a way for women to gain independence and control over their own lives. In late 1950's Kinshasa, 10% of women may have been involved in the sex trade, with an estimated 50 sex workers for every 1000 adult males.
- *Travel*. Increased availability, affordability, popularity and speed of both national and international travel by rail, motor vehicle, ship and aeroplane over the 20<sup>th</sup> century has no doubt contributed to the spread of many infectious diseases like HIV.
- *Intravenous drug use*. Non-medical injection of drugs grew during the 20th century. Initially the preferred route of injection by drug users was subcutaneous injection. Then between the First and Second World Wars, and especially post Vietnam, intravenous injection slowly became the preferred method. When non-medical access to injecting equipment was scarce, sharing of equipment was common.
- *The blood industry*. The discovery of blood groups in 1901 paved the way for blood transfusion (introduced 1940s-1950s in Africa). As this became a normal part of medical practice, a blood industry grew to satisfy the world-wide demand for blood and plasma. In some countries (but not Australia) people were paid to give blood, which had a consequence of attracting people who were desperate for cash; among those we know now are at high risk of HIV infection, such as intravenous drug users and prison inmates. Blood and plasma were also traded internationally, with people living in poorer countries sometimes exploited for profit and where collection was not necessarily sterile, allowing transmission between donors and to transfusion recipients.

There are various discredited *Conspiracy Theories*, such as suggestions that the virus was manmade, perhaps for biological warfare or genocidal purposes and was deliberately or accidentally released, or given to people during research into Hepatitis-B vaccines.

There are also *AIDS Denialists* who make claims such as HIV does not exist, has never been isolated or is not the cause of AIDS.

Lastly, there is a controversial (and considered disproven) theory for the transmission of SIV to humans, called the *Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) Theory*, which due to allegations of a deliberate cover-up of information, could be considered a conspiracy theory.

- *OPV Theory* proposes that by using the kidneys of chimpanzees and other primates to grow live attenuated polio virus during the research and production of experimental oral polio vaccines, various strains of SIV may have been able to recombine to become HIV during the manufacture of some batches of vaccines. SIV was unknown and undetectable before 1985.
- These vaccines were given to at least a million Africans in the Belgian colonial territories of what are now the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Rwanda from 1957 until 1960 and in the French colonial territories of French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa between 1957 and 1961. The locations of vaccination appreciably, but not completely, coincide with early African AIDS cases.
- *OPV* proponents specifically point out that Kinshasa (where the earliest HIV-1 epidemic is thought to have occurred and where the widest variety of subtypes of HIV-1 Group M are found) was an *OPV* test site and is also the largest city, with the best medical care, servicing the areas where some *OPVs* were trialled.
- *OPV* proponents have been suggested that the significant subtype diversification of HIV-1 Group M can be most easily explained by *OPV Theory*.
- *OPV* proponents suggest that the timing of *OPV* trials and the emergence of HIV coincide. Specifically they argue that SIV has existed in monkeys and apes for at least many centuries and despite being hunted for food also for many centuries, this seemingly had not previously started a HIV epidemic, with no proven cases of HIV infection or AIDS before 1959.
- Another monkey virus, simian vacuolating virus 40 (SV-40), is known to have been passed to humans via oral polio vaccines.

*Natural Transfer Theory* adherents argue that data from molecular biology and phylogenetic studies contradict *OPV Theory* and consequently regard the *OPV* hypothesis as disproven, with a 2004 article in the journal *Nature* describing the hypothesis as 'refuted'. They also point out that CHAT *OPV* trials were conducted in Poland with no emergence of HIV. Most recently Dr Jacques Pépin in his book *Origins of Aids (2011)* also rejects *OPV Theory*, and provides a science based, highly plausible and detailed narrative describing the way HIV probably became an epidemic, combining *Natural Transfer Theory* with *Contaminated Needle* and *Colonialism Theories*. Proponents of the *OPV Theory* (almost none of whom are doctors or scientists) continue to argue that their theory has not been disproven and could at least possibly be the correct one.

### 1930s-1950s

**1931:** In the French Congo in what is now Brassaville, Republic of the Congo (located directly across the Congo River from its twin city Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo), Dr Léon Pales, who had extensive expertise in post-mortem examinations, documents autopsies carried out on workers who died, building a railway from Brazzaville to Pointe Noire, from a new disease he describes as 'profound weight loss'. While no known samples exist for testing, there are 26 cases where he could not find any evidence of then known pathogens, parasites or cancers and recorded symptoms are suggestive of AIDS, including lymphadenopathy, chronic diarrhoea, wasting and brain atrophy.

Dr Jacques Pépin, studying blood born infection rates as a marker for HIV in elderly Africans, finds that people injected to treat sleeping sickness in the 1930s-1940s had died in the 1940s-1950s at a much higher rate than those not treated. We now know that the natural history of HIV, if untreated, results in a life expectancy following infection of around 10 years.

**1959: First confirmed case:** It may never be known exactly how or where SIV was transferred to humans, but the earliest proven case of HIV infection is from a blood sample taken and stored in 1959 from an unidentified Bantu male in the area of the city of Leopoldville in the Belgian Congo, later Zaire, now Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). After testing became possible in 1986, the sample tested positive for HIV antibodies and, later again, HIV-1 Group M RNA was isolated in the sample and partially sequenced. Kinshasa was the largest city and trade centre in colonial Central Africa and is considered to be the most likely place where HIV began to be transmitted exponentially and then exported to the world, as the widest diversity of HIV-1 Group M subtypes have been found there both currently and historically. Current diversity in its twin city Brazzaville is similarly wide.

**1959:** A possible, but unproven and now considered unlikely, case involved a 48-year-old Haitian born man, who had emigrated to the United States 30 years before, who at the time was working as a shipping clerk for a garment manufacturer in Manhattan. He developed many symptoms and infections that are now commonly associated with AIDS and died the same year.

**1959:** Another case which confused the search for the origins of AIDS for some time until the case was finally discredited, involved a former British Royal Navy man, David Carr, who died in 1959 having served between 1955 and 1957 (but apparently not in Africa) who sought help at the Royal Infirmary of Manchester, England. He was reported as suffering from many puzzling symptoms and infections that are now commonly associated with AIDS. In a 1990 issue of *The Lancet* it was reported that HIV-PCR tests on the preserved tissues of the man showed HIV infection. Following the discovery that the HIV present was genetically similar to modern strains, the claim was later retracted in a letter in a 1996 issue of *The Lancet*, in which it was reported the tissue sample had been contaminated in the laboratory.

### 1960s

*Natural Transfer Theory* adherents suggest that that up to 2,000 people in Africa could have been infected with HIV by the 1960s.

**1960:** The second earliest proven case is from 1960, with HIV having being found in a lymph node sample taken from an adult female, from what is now Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. When the genome of this sample was compared to the 1959 sample there was a 12 % difference, showing HIV had been present and mutating in humans for some decades.

**June 1960:** The Belgian Government grants independence to the Belgian Congo (now DRC). This leads to colonial nationals leaving and professionals with needed skills being imported from countries such as Haiti.

Retrospective clinical reviews of Belgian medical records in the DRC have identified another possible case described in 1962.

It is presumed that HIV is carried from Africa to Europe, the Caribbean and the United States of America (US), which is backed up by a study carried out in 2003, using genetic analysis of HIV, which proposed that HIV may have first arrived in the US around 1968.

According to more recent (2007) research, evidence suggests that the main US HIV epidemic was most likely introduced to Haiti from Africa in the mid-1960s, probably in or around 1966, which was a time when many Haitian professionals were returning home after working in the DRC. The evidence then suggests that the main US HIV epidemic is likely to have been introduced to the US from Haiti, probably in or around 1969, providing the foundation for the world-wide epidemic of HIV-1 Group M subtype B. Haiti was a prime destination for gay American tourists in the 1960s and 1970s.

**First confirmed US case:** A 16 year old African American, Robert Rayford, dies in May 1969 from bronchial pneumonia in St Louis, Missouri after reportedly being ill since late 1966 with mysterious symptoms and being under medical care for over 15 months. In 1987, stored tissue samples tested positive for HIV infection. Robert had never travelled overseas nor left the Midwest. He told doctors that he had never received a blood transfusion. He admitted to being sexually active but not to being gay. It has been suggested this was an isolated case unrelated to the main US HIV epidemic. *OPV Theory* proponent Edward Hooper has questioned whether this case was AIDS, stating that the boy's grandfather had reportedly suffered from similar symptoms; that the boy's symptoms, with the exception of his Kaposi's sarcoma, were not wholly typical of AIDS; and that that the HIV testing carried out may have used a test kit known to generate false positives on stored samples.

**June 27, 1969:** At the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in San Francisco, a riot erupts after patrons attack police who were engaged in routine harassment. This leads to the birth of the gay liberation and rights movements in the US and elsewhere in the western world.

### 1970s

Kinshasa, now recognised as the place where the first epidemic of HIV/AIDS occurred, experiences a sharp increase in the numbers of what we now call opportunistic infections, such as cryptococcal meningitis, Kaposi's sarcoma, tuberculosis and pneumonia.

Retrospective clinical reviews of Belgian medical records show early cases in the DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Chad and Uganda. Medical records from a number of other African countries also show marked increases in a number of what we would now recognise as AIDS-related opportunistic infections and diseases during the late 1970s and early 1980s. These records suggest that AIDS was most likely rare before this time.

Throughout the 1970s gay liberation results in a gay sexual revolution, so that large numbers of sexual partners and anonymous sex become accepted practice for many, and is even be seen by some as being an essential part of the gay identity.

Medical records show isolated cases of Pneumocystis (Jiroveci) Pneumonia (Pneumocystis or PCP), then known as Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia begin to be diagnosed in gay men in the US from the early 1970s onwards and serological studies suggest that thousands of individuals may have already been HIV-infected in the US by the late 1970s.

**1971:** Dr Jacques Pépin speculates that a Haitian plasma collection centre called Hemo-Caribbean which operated only from 1971 to 1972 and was known to have low hygiene standards may have contributed to the high prevalence of HIV in Haiti.

**1972:** South Australia is the first Australian state to decriminalise male homosexual sex (as long as it is practiced in private), for men over the age of 21.

**1972:** A new, seemingly more virulent form of Kaposi's sarcoma is first reported in Uganda, Africa.

**1975:** Factor VIII, a treatment for Haemophilia-A (a blood clotting disorder mainly affecting men), which is made from pooling blood from many thousands of blood donors, is trialled in the US. Before Factor VIII, Haemophiliacs lived much shorter lives, with severe cases often spending lots of time in hospital needing blood transfusions for small injuries people without Haemophilia may have never even noticed. In the US, there are at least five cases of extreme immune deficiency, discovered retrospectively, which occurred in heterosexual women between 1975 and 1981.

**1976:** A Canadian transport plane crashes near Kisangani (formerly Stanleyville), DRC. The sole survivor is transfused with 2 units of locally sourced blood. He develops symptoms in 1977 and dies in Canada in 1980. After testing becomes possible, stored samples of his blood show HIV infection.

**1976:** Arvid Noe, a Norwegian man who was once a sailor who visited Africa, later a truck driver in Europe, dies from Pneumocystis and other neurological infections, after first displaying symptoms in 1966. His wife dies eight months later from similar causes; their third daughter had died three months before the father, from an unusually severe case of chicken pox. Tissue samples are kept and in 1988, all test positive for HIV, later shown to be the Group O subtype of HIV-1, which is mostly found in West Central Africa. Researchers believe the sailor was most likely infected in the early 1960s in Africa and had infected his wife before she gave birth to their third child in 1967.

**1976:** The ACT decriminalises male homosexual sex for people over 16 and SA lowers age of consent to 17.

**1977:** A sex worker in San Francisco gives birth to the first of three children who would later be diagnosed with AIDS, and whose blood, when tested after their deaths, would reveal HIV infection. The mother dies of AIDS in May 1987.

**December 1977:** A Danish surgeon, Dr Grethe Rask, dies of Pneumocystis in Denmark, after having many of the symptoms and opportunistic infections that characterise what is later called AIDS for more than 3 years. She was reportedly openly lesbian and had worked from 1972 to 1975 in remote rural areas of what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo, and from 1975 to 1977 in the capital Kinshasa.

## 1978

Across Europe, immigrants from Central African and Caribbean countries, and returning nationals who had worked in Africa, begin to appear in hospitals with a range of previously rare opportunistic infections and mysterious symptoms. Examples are:

- A 34 year old Zairian airline secretary who dies in Kinshasa having after having been treated in Belgium with symptoms including rapid weight loss, swollen lymph glands and severe Cytomegalovirus. Initially she had sought treatment for her 3 month old daughter, who had oral Candida. Her two next most recently born children had died from respiratory infections and both had oral thrush since birth.
- In London, a Portuguese man, Senhor Jose, falls ill and is admitted to hospital with cryptosporidiosis. He first experiences symptoms in 1974/75 and he dies in 1979 in Portugal. He once ran a restaurant in Guinea-Bissau. After testing becomes available, he is shown to be one of the earliest proven cases of AIDS caused by HIV-2.
- In Paris, a Portuguese cab driver known as Monsieur Fel, who had worked in Angola and Guinea-Bissau with the Portuguese navy and later as a truck driver in the Belgian Congo, falls ill and is admitted to hospital with Pneumocystis. He first develops symptoms in 1977 and dies in 1980 from toxoplasmosis and when stored samples are later tested, also tests positive for HIV-2.
- A Greek fisherman, who had commercially fished Lake Tanganyika in Zaire, is treated in Antwerp, Belgium by Dr Peter Piot. He dies with very unusual disseminated cryptococcal meningitis, an infection with a fungus that is very rare. Dr Piot keeps samples of the fisherman's blood and tissues and after testing becomes available, it is confirmed that the man was infected with HIV.

**June:** In Sydney, a gay and lesbian protest and celebratory march is held on International Gay Solidarity Day to commemorate the Stonewall Riots in the US. Although the organisers of the march obtain permission, it is revoked at short notice, and police break up the march. 53 of the marchers are arrested, though all charges are eventually dropped.

**September:** A heterosexual French Geologist has a road accident in while in Haiti. His arm is amputated and he receives blood from 8 local donors. He develops symptoms in September 1981 and dies in Paris in October 1982.

At least three cases of the new disease amongst gay men in California and six cases among Haitian immigrants to the United States have been retrospectively confirmed for this year.

In Montreal, Canada, a Haitian visitor seeking medical treatment is diagnosed with immune deficiency and related symptoms, which is later shown to be AIDS.

Retrospective studies, including one that examines stored blood samples that had been donated by gay men during efforts to develop a Hepatitis-B vaccine, suggest that up to 6% of gay men in San Francisco are likely to have unknowingly become infected with HIV by this time.

Factor VIII, a treatment for the blood clotting disorder, Haemophilia-A, is approved for use in the US.

## 1979

A pattern of rare cases of Pneumocystis Pneumonia, Kaposi's sarcoma (KS) now known to be caused by Human Herpes Virus 8, Cytomegalovirus (CMV) also known as Human Herpes Virus 5, Toxoplasmosis a parasitic disease that mainly affects cats, oral and

gastrointestinal Candida, as well as other diseases usually only seen in the severely immune suppressed, the elderly or in malnourished children, begins to become apparent amongst gay men in the US, primarily in New York City, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

In the Bronx area of New York City and Newark area of New Jersey, infants born to women who were Injecting Drug Users (IDU) or the sexual partners of IDU, begin to be seen with swollen lymph glands and an apparent inability to fight common infections. Retrospective studies show that one third of regular heroin users in New York are infected by 1979.

**January:** Bisexual German concert violinist, Herbert Heinrich, dies after being diagnosed with KS, having experienced persistent swollen glands and many rare infections. He had never visited the US. Tests run on stored samples in 1986 confirm he was HIV-positive. There has been some unproven speculation he may have been infected either directly, or indirectly via sex workers, by Arvid Noe (see 1976).

Between June 1979 and November 1981, doctors in Haiti diagnose 12 cases of Kaposi's sarcoma (KS), a rare skin cancer usually found in older Eastern European men. The outbreak is puzzling to doctors as no cases had been seen between 1968 and 1977.

**June:** The annual Sydney Gay Mardi Gras is held for the first time, a year after the protest march in 1978.

**July:** The first paper describing the Western Blot technique, a method which can be used to study antibody specificity, antigen structure and also detect specific proteins, is published.

**December:** An 18yo Pittsburgh male develops generalised lymphadenopathy, after having received Factor VIII several times during 1978 and 1979. He is thought to be the first haemophiliac infected. He still had not developed AIDS by 1983 when his case was published.

It is estimated that 19% of gay men in San Francisco are unknowingly infected with the new disease with most being asymptomatic.

At least four cases of the new disease amongst gay men in California, and five cases among Haitian immigrants to the United States have been retrospectively confirmed for this year.

## 1980

By 1980, evidence suggests that HIV is present, and being transmitted, in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Australia. The disease has travelled unseen and unchecked and it is estimated that as many as 300,000 people may already be infected worldwide.

A vaccine for Hepatitis B becomes available in the US.

Many studies have shown that by 1980, STIs, such as Gonorrhoea, Chlamydia and Syphilis, were very common in sexually active gay men. For example, in 1980, gay men accounted for 55% of all Syphilis and Gonorrhoea cases in the US. As it is later discovered that having an STI can increase the risk of HIV transmission by up to a 10 fold increase, this is likely to have been a significant factor in the spread of HIV in gay communities.

Victoria decriminalises male homosexual sex for people over 16.

Belgian doctors in Kinshasa DRC note that there has been an upsurge in cases of Cryptococcus (normally a disease of birds) in Kinshasa's Memo Yemo General Hospital.

In Paris, a Zairian woman and a French woman who had worked in Zaire, die in intensive care with Pneumocystis.

**September:** In Copenhagen, a 37yo gay Danish agricultural engineer who had visited New York in 1977 dies with Pneumocystis and immune deficiency. The treating Doctor has also recently seen another Danish gay man who initially has unexplained weight loss and aggressive herpes and later dies and whose partner, he was told, is also ill with mysterious symptoms.

**November 25:** San Francisco resident Ken Horne, who has been unwell with varying degrees of symptoms since 1978, sees a dermatologist about some blue-purple blotches that are soon diagnosed as Kaposi's sarcoma. On December 5 his blood results show something is wrong with his white blood cell count and skin prick tests confirm something is wrong with his immune system.

**November 27:** On a visit to California, French-Canadian flight attendant Gaetan Dugas notices he has some additional small blue-purple spots on his face, which Doctors had diagnosed as untreatable KS in June. His travels took him too many American cities and also Haiti. He would later (wrongly) be considered as the person who introduced the new disease to the US and was for some time deemed "Patient Zero" because of his connections to many early cases of the new disease.

**December:** A gay German chef dies in Manhattan, after spending the three previous years working in Haiti, where he first displayed symptoms of the new disease.

**December:** Bernard Poiesz and Francis Ruscetti, working for Dr Robert Gallo, isolate the first samples of the first human retrovirus in a patient with lymphoma, which Gallo calls Human T-Cell Lymphotropic Virus (HTLV).

**December 23:** Rick Wellikoff, a gay schoolteacher from Brooklyn, dies of the new disease, in New York City.

It is estimated that 33% of gay men in San Francisco are unknowingly infected with the new disease with most being asymptomatic.

Retrospectively, by this year's end at least 55 people in the US have been identified with a diagnoses of infection(s) later linked to HIV/AIDS, with at least 12 people identified in Europe. At least 31 deaths are thought to be attributable to AIDS in the US.

## 1981: First Official Report of the New Disease

**January:** Ronald Reagan is inaugurated as President of the United States of America. He immediately begins to aggressively cut government expenditure. The budget for the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is reduced by half.

**January:** Dr Michael Gottlieb of the University of California, Los Angeles, treats a gay man suffering from Pneumocystis pneumonia. Upon closer inspection, he and colleagues discover the man has no CD4 cells, also known as helper T-cells because of their role in directing the immune system's response to infection. In coming months, Gottlieb and colleagues discover four additional cases of the rare pneumonia that have occurred in gay men between October 1980 and April 1981 and they alert the CDC on May 18.

**January 15:** Nick Rock dies in New York City. This is sometimes (wrongly) referred to as the first known New York City AIDS death.

**March:** Eight cases of a seemingly more aggressive form of the rare KS have appeared amongst young gay men in 3 New York hospitals, at least 2 of whom had friends in common and 4 of whom have died.

**April 24:** San Francisco resident Ken Horne is the first case of the new disease reported to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) with Kaposi's sarcoma and Cryptococcus. He dies on November 30 of this year.

**April 28:** Sandra Ford, a drug technician at the CDC, officially notes in a memo to her supervisor, an unusual large increase in requests for *pentamidine*, a treatment for antibiotic resistant Pneumocystis, including almost unheard of repeat requests for treatment. She also notes that she has heard that rumours are circulating in New York about the unusual appearance of rare sarcomas.

**May 18:** Dr Lawrence Mass becomes the first journalist in the world to write about the epidemic, in the *New York Native*, a gay newspaper. A gay tipster overheard his physician mention that some gay men were being treated in intensive-care units in New York City for a strange pneumonia. "Disease Rumours Largely Unfounded" was the headline on Mass's article, as New York City public-health officials refuted claims that there was a wave of disease sweeping through the gay community.

**June 5:** The CDC publish a report by Dr Michael Gottlieb in its *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* that a rare illness, Pneumocystis, has infected five gay men whose immune systems appeared to be severely suppressed, in Los Angeles. Two of the men had died and all the men also had CMV. Within days of the report appearing, doctors from across the US flood the CDC with reports of similar cases. This is referred to as the first official report on what will become the AIDS epidemic. As a result of this report, some mainstream news services publish short stories on the pneumonia outbreak and some gay papers publish short articles on "gay pneumonia". It has been estimated that by the time this first CDC report on the new disease was published, up to 250,000 US citizens may already have been infected.

**June 8:** The CDC forms a Task Force on Kaposi's sarcoma and Opportunistic Infections (the KSOI Taskforce).

**June 12:** In Paris, Dr Rozenbaum sees his first gay patient with Pneumocystis, having previously diagnosed Pneumocystis in a Portuguese taxi driver (1979), a Zairian airline employee (1980) and a French woman who had lived in central Africa (1980). He realises his patients are displaying the same symptoms as those reported in the *MMWR*.

**June 16:** The US National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute admits its first patient, with symptoms of the new disease.

**June 28:** *The Sentinel*, a gay newspaper in San Francisco, publishes five paragraphs about "gay pneumonia".

**July:** Sandra Ford searches the CDC's *pentamidine* request records and finds 9 patients who fit the new Pneumocystis profile during the last 6 months of 1980. She fails to find any 'gay pneumonia' cases from much before 1979 which suggests the disease is something new.

**July 3:** An Australian gay newspaper, the *Sydney Star Observer*, runs Australia's first article on a new disease affecting gay men in the US. Gay Related Immune Deficiency (GRID) is one of the terms used to describe the range of illnesses and infections being reported.

**July 3:** The CDC report, in the *MMWR*, on 26 cases of KS and Pneumocystis, both rare diseases, in homosexual men in New York City (20) and California (6) that have occurred since 1979. CMV, severe herpes, toxoplasmosis, candidiasis and immunodeficiency are also reported. Many have died within 24 months of their initial diagnosis. The illnesses are attributed to links with "aspects of the homosexual lifestyle". An update on the June 5 report shows 10 new Pneumocystis cases in California, with another 4 cases in Los Angeles and 6 cases in San Francisco, all in gay men. Physicians are asked to be alert for homosexual men exhibiting opportunistic infections associated with immune-suppression, as well as cases of KS or Pneumocystis.

**July 3:** In the US, *The New York Times* and the *LA Times* both publish short stories on an outbreak of a "rare cancer" in homosexuals, based on the CDC report and most major media run small stories following these newspaper reports. [Note, after this, mainstream media report little on the epidemic for some time, while the number of stories in gay media increase as more and more gay men show symptoms.]

**July:** The CDC KSOI taskforce begin to mobilise investigators to interview as many living patients with symptoms as possible to try and discover commonalities, later resulting in a Cluster Study and assisting in the development of a Case Control Questionnaire (see October).

**August:** At the CDC, a long time Venereal Disease worker, Paul Darrow, suggests that the pattern of infection looks like a sexually transmitted disease, with the number of sexual partners seeming to be a major risk factor.

**August 11:** Larry Kramer holds a meeting of around 80 'A-list' gay men in his New York apartment seeking funding for gay cancer research. Speaker Dr Friedman-Kein suggests that those who are sick all have had lots of sexual partners and long histories of VD.

**August 28:** The CDC report, in the *MMWR*, that 108 cases have been reported to the CDC. 94% were gay or bisexual men. Only a few were not white men, and only one case had occurred in a woman. The mortality rate is terrible with 40% of the reported patients dead so far.

**August:** A preliminary communication on extensively disseminated Kaposi's sarcoma in young homosexual men American is published in the in the specialty *Journal of Dermatopathology*, by GJ Gottlieb (not M Gottlieb).

**September 15:** In the US, the National Cancer Institute (NCI), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) sponsors a conference in Bethesda, MD, on Kaposi's sarcoma and opportunistic infections. About fifty leading clinicians attend.

**September 19:** *The Lancet* publishes a report describing the clinical findings of the 8 cases of KS in homosexual men in New York.

**October:** The CDC KSOI taskforce begin the Case Control study, of living patients in the US with a questionnaire that has 62 questions over 22 pages detailing every conceivable behaviour and exposure that might be involved in the epidemic. Blood samples are also taken.

**October:** A young homosexual male is hospitalised in Barcelona, Spain with KS, CMV and candidiasis. He had visited New York in 1974.

**October:** Simian Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (Simian AIDS) is identified in macaques in two of US National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Regional Primate Centres.

**December:** Australian editions of *Time* and *Newsweek* run their first Australian mainstream press stories about the epidemic.

**December 1:** A budget request is sent to the Director of the CDC for US\$833,800 to cover the activities of the KSOI taskforce for the next 6 months. No answer is forthcoming.

**December 10:** Dr Michael Gottlieb and colleagues report in *The New England Journal of Medicine* that harmless viruses and bacteria can often cause fatal illnesses, such as Pneumocystis, in homosexual men and suggests CMV as a possible cause with sexual transmission also

suggested. In the same issue, Dr Alvin Friedman-Kien reports on Kaposi's sarcoma and other reports and an editorial also appear. These are often referred to as the first long articles in a peer journal with clinical descriptions of some of the diseases that make up the disorder that becomes known as AIDS.

**December 10:** Attempting to heighten awareness and raise money for research of "gay cancer" Bobbi Campbell, a registered nurse and the 16<sup>th</sup> diagnosed case in the San Francisco area, becomes the "KS poster boy" by going public in a gay paper *The Sentinel*.

**December 10:** A baby in California becomes ill in the first known case of AIDS from a blood transfusion.

**December:** Dr Ayre Rubenstein, a paediatric immunologist, writes an abstract for a conference about infants with the same symptoms as gay men, but the conference academy reject the abstract as they would not accept that the diseases could have the same cause.

**December 12:** The first UK death, believed to be what is now called AIDS, is reported in a letter in *The Lancet*. It concerned a 49 year-old man who was admitted to Brompton Hospital in London suffering from Pneumocystis and CMV. The man had travelled to the US many times. In the same issue of *The Lancet* an article describes the symptoms leading to 'Gay Compromise Syndrome'.

**December:** Dr Bob Bigger, a researcher with the NCI, travels from the US to Aarhus, Denmark, intending to study gay men who are hopefully unaffected. He is dismayed to find that there are already 5 cases in gay men of the mysterious new disease reported in Copenhagen.

By the end of this year, there was a cumulative total of 270 reported cases of AIDS in the US, then known as Gay Related Immune Deficiency (GRID), Gay Cancer, Gay Plague or Gay Pneumonia, with 121 deaths. The World Health Organization later notes at least 36 cases by this time in Europe: France (17), Belgium (6), Switzerland (5), Denmark (3), UK (2), West Germany (2) and Spain (1).

### 1982: The new disease gets an agreed upon name (AIDS), First AIDS diagnosis in Australia

A new wasting disorder, named "Slim Disease", is described in Uganda, Africa. It is later revealed that this is in fact AIDS.

The earliest published risk reduction advice suggesting safe sex practices begin to appear this year. Most gave strategies such as having fewer sexual partners, not exchanging body fluids, avoiding anal sex, knowing your partners (or not having anonymous sex) and having partners who are in 'good health'. An early example is the Safer Sex pamphlet '*Play Fair!*' published by the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence as a response to 'gay cancer'. It was written by registered nurses Sister Florence Nightmare (Bobbi Campbell) and Sister Roz Erektion, assisted by other medical professionals.

Early in this year in a Copenhagen hospital, Dr Ib Bygbjerg, who had worked with Dr Grethe Rask in Zaire, begins to see patients with the strange 'gay' syndrome. He is struck with an eerie feeling that the syndrome mirrored patients he had seen in Africa and Dr Rask's case itself.

**January:** Three studies are published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, linking Pneumocystis and KS with immune system deficiency. These studies are reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

**January:** French daily newspapers begin writing stories about the mysterious cancer affecting American homosexuals.

**January:** The Sydney STD Clinic runs advertisements, encouraging Gay Men to have blood tests for STDs.

**January:** The *Sydney Morning Herald* runs its first GRID story.

**January 12:** The Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) is founded in New York, at a meeting held in the apartment of Larry Kramer, initially its aim is to raise private funds for gay cancer research.

**January 15:** The National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases service (NIAID) admits its first patient, with symptoms of the new disease. He is seen by Dr Anthony S. Fauci.

**January:** Bruce Evatt at the CDC receives a disturbing phone call from a doctor based in Miami, Florida who is convinced that Factor VIII killed his patient, an aging haemophiliac who had died of Pneumocystis a few months previously. CDC KSOI Taskforce staff had already predicted that if gay pneumonia was transmissible, then haemophiliacs and blood transfusion recipients would be at risk.

**January:** In New York, a small study of gay men looking for a link between CMV and GRID shows that 4 out of 5 tested, display T-cell depletion.

**February 22:** The December budget request for the CDC KSOI Taskforce has still not been approved. The Case Control Study has stalled, as there is no money to pay for a statistician to analyse the collected data. A study proposal exists to use stored blood donated, and to re-analyse detailed questionnaires completed, by gay men in efforts to develop a Hepatitis-B vaccine, to find out when the new disease started and how it may be transmitted. Funding approval is not given for the study to begin for 2 more years.

**February 25:** The *Wall Street Journal* runs an article saying that a new often fatal illness seen in homosexuals now seems to be turning up in women and heterosexual males (who were largely intravenous drug users).

**March 3:** The US Public Health Service holds a conference on the new disease at the CDC in Atlanta. Debate centres on whether the disease is caused by transmissible virus or other immune-suppressing agent(s).

**March:** The US NCI establishes an Epidemiology Working Group on Kaposi's sarcoma.

**March 14:** Dr Jim Curren of the CDC addresses a meeting of the San Francisco Gay Doctors group, saying that what they had seen already was the tip of the iceberg and that many of those at the meeting would be fighting this disease for many years to come. Some think he is being hysterical.

**March 25:** Simon P Guzman, the 11th gay man to die of GRID in San Francisco, is the first human being ever to have *Cryptosporidium* listed as a cause of death. It is a disease previously only affecting sheep.

**April:** A dizzying array of monikers and acronyms exist for the 10 month old disease without a name that is now killing a person almost every day in the US. By this time, the CDC knows of 10 women who have been diagnosed with the disease, all of whom have had sex with either a bisexual man or an injecting drug user. Haitian immigrants have been identified with the disease. 30 heterosexual and 18 men of unknown sexual orientation also have the disease. Because the majority of cases are in gay or bisexual men, many find it difficult to move from thinking of the disease as GRID.

**April 8:** In New York, GMHC hold the first community benefit to raise funds for gay cancer, raising US\$52,000. Shortly after this, GMHC opens an information hotline, which receives over 100 calls on its first day.

**April:** NCI researchers begin a field study to try to determine the immunological status of healthy homosexual men.

**April:** The NSW Blood Transfusion Service advertises in the *Sydney Star Observer* for gay men to donate blood.

**April 13:** In the US at the first congressional hearing on the new disease, Convenor Henry Waxman, a Democrat congressman from Los Angeles gives the opening speech suggesting that the disease is being ignored by government because it is primarily affecting gay men, one the nation's most stigmatised and discriminated against minorities. The CDC gives testimony that tens of thousands of people may be affected by the new disease and that some cases had cost over \$50,000 in medical treatment before death. The NCI announce they will make US\$1 million available for research into KS over the next year. They are criticised for the small amount, but it is the first time that public funds are made available for research. Even more tragically, the funds would not begin to be dispersed until 1983. The media largely fail to report on the Congressional hearing.

**May:** Conspiracy theories are circulating in the gay communities of New York and San Francisco that the Government introduced the disease.

**May 6:** Dr Robert Gallo's lab contacts the KSOI Taskforce and reports it is now possible to culture lymphocytes.

**May 12:** The CDC report, in *MMWR*, on generalised lymphadenopathy in homosexual males as a possible early sign of the disease. This is the first CDC update on the epidemic in 9 months.

**June 11:** The CDC report, in *MMWR*, on Pneumocystis and KS among heterosexual American intravenous drug users (IDU).

**June 11:** Sandra Ford, at the CDC, gets the first request for *pentamidine*, to treat Pneumocystis in a haemophiliac. When the patient is interviewed 3 days later, the CDC investigator is satisfied that Factor VIII is the most likely risk factor.

**June:** The US National Library of Medicine begins to compile a bibliography on manifestations of the new disease.

**June 18:** The CDC release the results of their Los Angeles Cluster Study, which shows clusters and chains of gay men who had sexual contact with each other that have developed GRID. This suggests sexual transmission of a virus, but the release to the media comes with a large number of qualifiers and is not seen as conclusive evidence of sexual transmission. Some in the CDC using the study data estimated that the incubation period of the disease may be at least 10.5 months.

**June 30:** Persuasive, but not conclusive, evidence that the disease is caused by an infectious agent is presented at a meeting held at the New York Department of Health.

**July:** In New York, the GMHC releases its first newsletter, the first non scientific publication on the epidemic. It presents a range of views about risk reduction strategies or what might constitute safe sex, but using condoms is not one of the strategies given.

**July:** Staff at the CDC are very concerned as the number of cases being diagnosed seems to be doubling every 6 months.

**July 4:** In the UK, Terrence Higgins dies. He is the first Briton whose death is widely attributed to what will become known as AIDS.

**July 9:** The CDC report, in *MMWR*, on Pneumocystis, KS and opportunistic infections in 34 male and female Haitian immigrants.

**July 16:** The CDC report, in *MMWR*, on Pneumocystis in 3 men with haemophilia.

**July 18:** The *Washington Post* publishes an interview with Jim Curren from the CDC where he says that there may continue to be additional groups that get the new disease and people are going to keep dying until the cause is found.

**July 27:** The CDC hold a meeting in Washington DC with Federal Drug Authority (FDA) officials, university researchers, community activists, blood industry representatives and others to discuss a number of issues about the epidemic including the issue of deferring people from "high risk groups" from donating blood. All CDC proposed risk reduction strategies receive a "wait and see what happens" reaction. The most memorable achievement of the meeting is that *Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome* (AIDS) is adopted as the official name for the disease.

**August:** In the US, a gay physician calls for all homosexuals to stop donating blood.

**August:** The Terrence Higgins Trust (THT), a major UK AIDS charity, is set up by his friends.

**September 24:** The CDC report, in *MMWR*, that as well as gay men, other groups that are at risk of AIDS are injecting drug users, people of Haitian origin and haemophiliacs. Medical students in the US are first taught about "the 4 Hs", the groups thought most likely to acquire the disease, being Homosexuals, Heroin addicts, Haitians, and Haemophiliacs. Anecdotally, it is reported that sometimes 'Haitians' is dropped in favour of 'Hookers' (sex workers).

**September:** In the UK, people who are thought to be particularly susceptible to AIDS, including gay men, are asked not to donate blood.

**September 27:** The City of San Francisco approve US\$450,000 in funding for a number of services including the world's first AIDS Clinic, grief counselling services, and personal support services for AIDS patients.

**September 28:** In the US, a bill is introduced to Congress seeking approval for US\$5 million for the CDC and US\$10 million for the NIH specifically for AIDS Research.

**October:** Professor Ron Penny, of St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney, identifies the first case of AIDS in Australia in an American tourist.

**October:** A few French scientists postulate that the virus that causes AIDS came from Africa and begin the search for the virus in the lymph nodes of men with lymphadenopathy, which they believe is an early stage of AIDS.

**November 5:** The CDC report, in *MMWR*, report that the cause of AIDS is still unknown, but suggest that the immune system disorder is most likely due to an infectious agent requiring intimate, direct contact involving mucosal surfaces, such as sexual contact among homosexual males, or passed from mother to child during birth, or via the sharing of blood as occurs among intravenous drug users and possibly haemophilia patients using Factor VIII products.

**November:** The CDC publish formal recommendations for the protection of laboratory and clinical personnel having contact with AIDS patients and clinical specimens. The recommendations are based on those for Hepatitis-B.



**November:** Dr Robert Gallo of the NCI finds evidence of an enzyme, reverse transcriptase (RT), in the infected lymphocytes of AIDS patients, indicating the new disease may be a retrovirus, but is unable to keep the lymphocytes alive long enough to find actual virus, which he believes will turn out to be the retrovirus HTLV-1, he previously discovered. A retrovirus has a genome that consists of RNA rather than DNA and when a retrovirus infects a cell, it uses RT to convert its RNA into DNA, which then hijacks the cell's machinery to produce more viruses.

**December:** In France, the Institute Pasteur's retrovirus lab joins the search for the AIDS virus.

**December 10:** The CDC report, in *MMWR*, on cases of AIDS amongst adults and infants who received blood transfusions and on 22 cases of unexplained immunodeficiency and opportunistic infections in infants all of whom are children of high risk parents.

**December 12:** Michael Callen, a singer/songwriter, and Richard Berkowitz, an ex-sex worker, publish an article in the *New York Native* calling for gay men to be less promiscuous, to avoid the exchange of potentially infectious fluids and for gay bathhouses to close. It is strongly criticised by the gay community in letters to the editor and articles published in following editions, which prevents a planned follow-up article that was to appear in the following months issue on how to have safe sex.

**December 17:** The CDC report, in *MMWR*, on unexplained immunodeficiency and opportunistic infections in infants in New York, New Jersey and California.

By the end of this year, there were a cumulative total of 1285 cases of AIDS reported in the US, with 7 in the UK. AIDS has been reported in 14 nations. Later studies show estimates that by this time, at least 1 in 5 gay men living in San Francisco have HIV.

### 1983

#### Virus causing AIDS discovered and reported. First Australian diagnosed with AIDS and first Australian AIDS death

Investigations begin into the occurrence of AIDS in Zaire, Rwanda and other African nations. They show AIDS is widespread and that as many women as men have the disease, indicating it must be able to be heterosexually transmitted.

The Northern Territory decriminalises male homosexual sex for people over 18.

**January 4:** The CDC meet with blood bank organisations and interest groups in Atlanta to discuss proposals to reduce the risk of transmitting AIDS via blood transfusion and blood products. As many of the risk groups for AIDS also were at high risk of past or present Hepatitis-B infection, the CDC suggest that testing for HBV antibodies as a surrogate marker for AIDS may eliminate many asymptomatic people who will develop AIDS. Screening out individuals at high risk for AIDS from the blood donor pool using questionnaires or interviews is also suggested. No consensus is reached.

**January 7:** The CDC report, in *MMWR*, on cases of AIDS in female sexual partners of men with AIDS and on growing numbers of cases in prisoners.

**January:** The US media's interest in, and the number of stories about, AIDS increases following revelations about transfusion AIDS.

**January:** The three largest blood collecting agencies in the US call for more education for donors about the symptoms of AIDS and contemplate a system of self-deferral, although they do not directly ban gay men from donating blood.

**January:** Researchers at the Institute Pasteur in Paris, find evidence of reverse transcriptase in a lymph tissue culture taken from a patient from a high risk group with early AIDS symptoms and who dies in 1988 with AIDS. They are able to take electron micrographs of a virus that looks like a retrovirus, but not like HTLV-1.

**February:** At a seminar in Boston, French AIDS Task Force member Jacques Leibowitch presents evidence of two waves of European AIDS, one with links to Africa and no links to sexuality, the second linked to sexual contact with homosexuals from the US. The same evidence is presented by Jean Baptiste Brunet and Odile Picard at a symposium in New York in March.

**March 3:** In the US, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issue donor screening guidelines that state that AIDS high-risk groups should not donate blood. [Note: The safeguards for the US blood supply are not fully implemented for another two years, until a blood test is developed for HIV. In the meantime, 35,000 Americans become infected from contaminated blood and blood products.]

**March 4:** The CDC, in the *MMWR*, publish their first public health risk reduction advice, which contains statements such as "sexual contact should be avoided with persons known or suspected to have AIDS" and that "members of high-risk groups should be aware that multiple sex partners increase the probability of developing AIDS". It does not suggest condom use as a safe sex strategy. It defines persons that may be considered at increased risk of AIDS as; those with symptoms and signs suggestive of AIDS; sexual partners of AIDS patients; sexually active homosexual or bisexual men with multiple partners; Haitian immigrants within the United States; present or past injecting drug users; patients with haemophilia; and sexual partners of those individuals who are at increased risk for AIDS.

**March 14:** The *New York Native* publish Gay activist Larry Kramer's article "1112 and counting..." as its front page story. Kramer strongly criticises the federal government and its agencies, the New York City Council, mainstream and gay media, gay doctors and the gay community itself for a lack of action in response to the AIDS crisis. He lists 21 people he personally knows who have died. It is soon reprinted in San Francisco's *Bay Area Reporter*. The article polarises the gay community, with some thinking he is being alarmist, and others who are moved to take strong political action.

**March:** The Australian Federal Election is won by the Labor Party and Dr Neal Blewett becomes the Minister for Health.

**March:** An article in an Australian newspaper highlights the possibility that the blood supply may already be contaminated with AIDS.

**March:** The *San Francisco Chronicle* publishes a story based on a leaked confidential report suggesting that perhaps 1 in 100 gay men in the area may be infected; meaning a man with 20 sexual contacts in a year had a 1 in 10 chance of being in contact with a person with AIDS. [Note: Later studies show that San Franciscan gay men who were engaging in high risk activities at this time possibly had about a 1 in 4 chance of being in contact with an infected person.]

**March 31:** At a meeting of gay doctors and gay community leaders in San Francisco, condoms are recommended as one way to reduce contact with bodily fluids, including semen, urine, saliva and blood, as the actual transmission vector was still unknown.

**April:** First Australian citizen diagnosed with AIDS in Melbourne, in a person who had returned from living overseas for some years.

**April:** The Hepatitis B vaccine becomes available in Australia. Assurances are given that the vaccine will not transmit AIDS.

**April 11:** In the US, the *Newsweek* magazine cover story is "The mysterious and deadly disease called AIDS may be the public-health threat of the century. How did it start? Can it be stopped?"

**April 12:** US Secretary of Health and Human Services Margaret Heckler tells Congress that no further funding for AIDS is necessary. On the same day, Dr Don Francis, an epidemiologist at the CDC sends a memo to his bosses stating that the "government's response to this disaster has been far too little" and that the "inadequate funding to date has seriously restricted the CDC's ability to work and has presumably deepened the invasion of this disease into the American population".

**May:** *How to Have Sex in an Epidemic. One Approach* by Michael Callen and Richard Berkowitz is published in the US. The 48 page booklet is considered by many to have pioneered the safe sex approach we use today, that of condom use. It based its advice on a specific (though it turns out later, incorrect) theory of what was causing AIDS, proposed by their collaborator Dr Joseph Sonnabend, and gives risk advice on specific sexual acts.

**May 2:** In San Francisco, an AIDS Candlelight March is held with the theme "fighting for our lives". It attracts thousands of marchers and is extensively covered by the media. Many speakers at the event are People with AIDS (PWA). It is this event that evolves into the annual AIDS Candle Memorial.

**May 6:** The *Journal of the American Medical Association* (wrongly) reports that household contact may transmit AIDS, which leads to mainstream media hysteria. Many people who were never at risk of AIDS are fearful for their lives.

**May:** The *Sydney Star Observer* publishes its first article recommending gay men use condoms to reduce the risk of AIDS.

**May 9:** Dr Gordon Archer, head of Sydney's Red Cross Blood Bank, calls on promiscuous homosexual men not to donate blood.

**May:** In a US Congressional Hearing, Henry Waxman, a Democrat congressman from Los Angeles, asks why the budget for the CDC AIDS activities is being cut. The government line is that AIDS has all the money it needs at the moment. Some days later a request for an extra 12 million dollars for AIDS activities arrives and is approved.

**May 13:** The NSW Gay Rights Lobby, concerned about the explicit association of AIDS with gays, pickets the Red Cross Blood Bank with slogans such as "ban the bigots, not the blood". This becomes a public relations disaster as homosexuals are accused of being willing to put others at risk by continuing to donate blood.

**May 15:** Representatives from over 20 gay groups in Sydney, including the Gays Counselling Service, Gay Rights Lobby, Gay Solidarity Group, Radical Women, the Metropolitan Community Church and the Gay Business Association, respond to the call for blood donor bans and the bad reception of the picket of the blood bank, by meeting and establishing an AIDS Action Committee. [This later becomes the AIDS Council of NSW or ACON].

**May 17:** AIDS is declared a notifiable disease in Victoria, the first Australian state to take such action.

**May 17:** In the UK, the first official report of AIDS is released with 3 Englishmen having died and with 6 more cases being monitored.

**May:** The NSW Gays Counselling Service hand out photocopies of a *Newsweek* article in an attempt to raise awareness of the new disease.

**May:** UK newspapers refer to "killer blood", inciting public concerns about the national blood supply. Public interest also begins to grow following the screening of a TV program, *The Killer in the Village*, and a number of newspaper articles on the subject of the "gay plague".

**May:** France bans the importation of American Blood products. The UK and Holland consider similar action.

**May:** At a conference organised by the Haitian Physicians' Association, evidence is presented that 30% of male Haitian AIDS cases admitted homosexual contacts with international tourists – usually economically motivated, rather than because of personal sexual preference.

**May 19:** In San Francisco, a meeting is held between gay political leaders, AIDS educators and bathhouse owners. Bathhouse owners refuse to prominently display warnings about AIDS on their premises. CDC statistics already show that bathhouse users were at substantially higher risk of STIs.

**May 20:** The journal *Science* publishes a paper by Françoise Barré, Professor Luc Montagnier and others, of the Institute Pasteur in France, reporting on the discovery of a new retrovirus they call Lymphadenopathy Associated Virus (LAV), that they suggest could be the cause of AIDS. Dr Gallo of the NCI reviews this paper before it was published and wrote an opening summary paragraph for the article, which Montagnier does not see before publication, describing LAV as a member of the HTLV family of viruses.

**May 20:** 3 other articles in the journal *Science* by Dr Robert Gallo and Dr Max Essex suggest that HTLV is the cause of AIDS.

**May:** In San Francisco, Stanford University Hospital begins screening blood for T-cell depletion, the first medical centre in the US to test blood, looking for evidence of AIDS in donated blood.

**May:** Following a meeting in Denver US, a non-profit advocacy group, the US National Association of People with AIDS, releases a mission statement calling for a humane response to the crisis. "We condemn attempts to label us as 'victims,' a term which implies defeat, and we are only occasionally 'patients,' a term which implies passivity, helplessness, and dependence upon the care of others. We are 'People With AIDS' (PWA)." The statement includes a list of recommendations for health care providers and others on how to treat people with AIDS. The list becomes known as "The Denver Principles." Within months, PWA New York had distributed the first safe sex poster, which was designed to be placed in gay bathhouses.

**June:** The Australian National Red Cross Blood Bank Transfusion Committee ask that all sexually active gay or bisexual men with multiple partners, injecting drug users and their partners, not to donate blood using a self-selection process whereby donors from affected communities assess risk factors in the sexual behaviour or drug use before donating blood.

**June:** The San Francisco Department of Public Health release a set of posters that say "use condoms", "avoid any exchange of bodily fluids", "limit your use of recreational drugs" and "enjoy more time with fewer partners".

**June:** In the UK, Dr Tony Pinching and his colleagues at St Mary's Hospital in London release preliminary results from a study of 97 London gay men. The study showed that a high proportion of these men had immune cell abnormalities, and a decreased ability to fight off disease. It was believed that these abnormalities might represent a latent phase of AIDS.

**June:** The NSW AIDS Action Committee (NAAC) convinces NSW Health to form an AIDS consultative committee made up of Health Department employees, medical specialists and members of the AAC.

**June:** Within weeks of being formed, NAAC collects over 400 academic and scientific articles, handbooks on dealing with AIDS and news clippings, most of which are from the US, and establish these as a resource for public use.

**June:** In Victoria, Dr Ron Lucas, seconded to the CDC from Fairfield Hospital, proposes that Fairfield staff "warn the homosexual community of the impending illness", which he describes as "something like Hepatitis-B in many ways".

**June 16:** The health subcommittee of the Alternative Life Styles Organisation (ALSO) in Melbourne holds a public meeting to hear doctors answer questions about AIDS. Over 300 attend.

**June 24:** As fear of the new disease grows, the CDC tries to calm the public in a note in *MMWR* stating that the "vast majority of cases continue to occur among persons in the major identified risk categories. The cause of AIDS is unknown, but it seems most likely to be caused by an agent transmitted by intimate sexual contact, through contaminated needles, or, less commonly, by percutaneous inoculation of infectious blood or blood products. No evidence suggests transmission of AIDS by airborne spread. The failure to identify cases among friends, relatives, and co-workers of AIDS patients provides further evidence that casual contact offers little or no risk."

**June 27:** AIDS is declared a notifiable disease in South Australia, Tasmania and Queensland.

**June 29:** The Australian Health Minister, the Hon Dr Neal Blewett MP, speaks out against what he terms the "growing AIDS hysteria". On the same day, it is reported that Reverend Fred Nile calls for gay men to be quarantined.

**July:** The AIDS Prospective Study is launched, the first major epidemiological study in Australia.

**July:** The *Sydney Star Observer* publishes an article linking gay bashings to fear of AIDS.

**July:** The Australian Prostitutes Collective is founded in Victoria.

**July:** In the US, *Time* magazine, which at the time has a circulation of over 4.5 million readers, runs its first AIDS cover story. The article uses the term "groups at risk" and identifies the four groups at risk as "homosexual men, intravenous drug users, immigrants from Haiti, and haemophiliacs".

**July:** In the UK, *The Times* reports that Scottish health experts are worried that the Edinburgh international festival next month may become a breeding ground for the spread of the mystery disease AIDS, as the festival attracts large numbers of gay men. The House of Commons debate the public health risk following the press reports.

**July:** In Australia, local community-based AIDS organisations begin to raise AIDS issues with their state health departments. Early gay community action campaigns are underway. The Australian National Health and Medical Research Council form a working party on AIDS.

**July 8:** Australia's first AIDS death occurs at Melbourne's Prince Henry's Hospital - a 43 year old Australian who had lived in the US.

**July 12:** Melbourne's ALSO holds Melbourne's first public meeting to specifically tackle the issues of politics of AIDS and the Victorian AIDS Action Committee is formed. [This later becomes the Victorian AIDS Council/Gay Men's Health Crisis].

**July:** The NSW Gays Counselling Service forms an AIDS Support Group, to look after the emotional needs of people living with AIDS, from which the Ankali Project later emerges in May 1985.

**July:** The US NIH Clinical Center issue precautions for health care workers caring for AIDS patients.

**July 14:** The Institute Pasteur, France, begin testing blood using the first enzyme based diagnostic test they have developed (known as the ELISA test), which is able to detect HIV antibodies in blood.

**July 26:** San Francisco General Hospital opens the first dedicated AIDS ward in the US. It is fully occupied within days.

**August:** A Sydney dentist bans all gay clients.

**August 15:** The NSW AIDS Action Committee holds a public forum about AIDS in Paddington Town Hall. Over 600 attend to hear and ask questions. At the meeting Professor Ron Penny hands out surveys and asks gay men to join a study. Men in the audience ask that in return Professor Penny lobby the Government to decriminalise sex between consenting men on medical grounds, as taking part in the study could mean admitting that they have broken the law.

**September 2:** The CDC publish their first set of recommended precautions for health care workers and allied health professionals designed to prevent the transmission of AIDS.

**September:** In the US, the National Institute of Dental Research (NIDR) issues recommendations to dentists about precautions they should take in managing their patients with AIDS.

**September 15:** The Institute Pasteur, France, lodge an application for a European patent for their HIV ELISA test in London and lodge a sample of LAV with the National Collection of Microorganisms.

**September:** In the US, an NCI taskforce meeting discusses Montagnier's May paper on LAV along with new evidence including isolation of LAV in 3 AIDS patients, a homosexual, haemophiliac and a Haitian; proof that LAV had an affinity for T4 cells; discussion of ELISA test results for LAV and evidence that LAV is closer related to lentivirus' rather than HTLV. Dr Gallo argues that HTLV, not LAV causes AIDS.

**September:** The Institute Pasteur send samples of LAV to Dr Gallo in an effort to establish that LAV is not related to Human T-Cell Lymphotropic Virus (HTLV), a retrovirus Gallo had discovered years earlier and was postulating was responsible for AIDS.

**September:** At a meeting in Melbourne, the State based AIDS Action Committees form an Australian AIDS Action Committee, the precursor to the Australian Federation of Aids Organisations (AFAO).

**October:** Project SIDA, a multidisciplinary study on AIDS, based in Kinshasa, Zaire, is initiated jointly by NIAID, CDC, the Belgian Institute of Tropical Medicine, and the Zairian Ministry of Health.

**November:** The NSW Gays Counselling Service (later The Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service of NSW) forms AIDS Home Support, to look after home care needs of people living with AIDS, from which the Community Support Network (CSN) later emerges.

**November:** Doctor Jay Levy at the University of California independently isolates a retrovirus from blood of AIDS patients, but decides against publication until he can accumulate definitive proof that the virus is the cause of AIDS and not an opportunistic infection.

**November:** In Geneva, the World Health Organization (WHO) holds its first meeting to assess the global AIDS situation. By this point, AIDS has been found in several dozen countries. Delegates from the Soviet Union insist that AIDS will not be found within the Eastern bloc. Much of the conversation centres around the blood supply, as several European countries had already banned importing blood or blood products from the United States.

**December 6:** In the US, a Congressional subcommittee report entitled “the Federal Response to AIDS” is released. It reveals that despite the government’s claim that AIDS is the number one health priority and that sufficient funds had been spent on AIDS, important surveillance, studies and research have not been completed due to lack of funds and resources. It is also critical of the fact that a coordinated plan for AIDS does not exist. The media largely fail to report on the claims.

**December:** Abraham Karpas, a haematologist in Cambridge, UK publishes an electron micrograph of a virus he found in the blood of a young homosexual with AIDS – it turns out to be Montagnier’s LAV, not Gallo’s HTLV-I or II.

**December:** The Institute Pasteur applies for a US patent for their ELISA test for LAV antibodies.

**December:** The CDC, using a complicated statistical model based on known blood transfusion AIDS cases, where the date of infection is presumed to be known, attempt to estimate the average incubation period for AIDS. They are horrified when according to the analyses the average period from infection to developing AIDS is estimated as 5.5 years with the possibility that some cases may not progress to AIDS for more than 11 years, although some may progress to AIDS in as short a time as 6 months after infection. Many had been working under the assumption that the incubation period may have been, at most, as long as 1 or 2 years. This information is not made public for some time.

By the end of this year, there were a cumulative total of 4,107 cases of AIDS in the US and 7 cases in Australia. AIDS has been reported in 33 countries.

#### **1984 – The discovery of the virus that causes AIDS announced to the public.**

Around this time, a strong national response is developing in Australia, characterised by partnership between governments, health workers, researchers, and the affected communities. Additionally there is bipartisan support of most political parties at both the National and State levels to deal with the epidemic.

Victoria Prostitutes Collective produces the first sex industry AIDS peer education pamphlet *Facts on AIDS for the Working Girl*.

A landmark advertisement by community groups in Victoria, on the need for safe sex practices, is published.

The world’s first needle and syringe exchange project is started in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Some Sydney doctors break the law to hand out needles and syringes to injecting drug users, putting pressure on politicians to change the law.

**January 12:** The *New England Journal of Medicine* publishes CDC documentation of the first 18 blood transfusion-associated AIDS cases. In the US, Blood banks still refuse to use surrogate Hepatitis-B testing to screen for AIDS.

**January 26:** Dr Gallo tells the CDC he has isolated the virus that causes AIDS. He calls it HTLV-III.

**February:** In both San Francisco and New York, it begins to become apparent that gay men using bathhouses are not following safe sex guidelines such as using condoms for anal sex. Rates of anal gonorrhoea in gay men rise for the first time in some years.

**February 26:** Samples of LAV arrive at the CDC in Atlanta. The CDC produce their own antibody tests using the samples, which they use to test stored samples of people who have died from or have AIDS.

**March 1:** *The New York Times* reports that Californian scientists have isolated a virus in a monkey with simian AIDS, which, like AIDS in humans, suppresses the immune system and can be passed on by blood to blood contact.

**March 9:** Researchers from the Institute Pasteur provide the CDC with convincing proof that LAV causes AIDS, having been able to successfully identify which of 30 blood samples sent to them came from people with AIDS using their ELISA test for LAV.

**March 12:** Dr Gallo’s lab tests the same 30 blood samples sent to France using his own ELISA test and comes up with similar results to the Institute Pasteur, although the results suggest his test is marginally less accurate.

**March 27:** *The New York Times* reports on, so-called, Patient Zero, a flight attendant (wrongly) accused of being the first person to introduce HIV into North America. Gaetan Dugas, who was linked to at least 40 of the first 248 US cases dies 3 days later on March 30 at age 32.

**April:** Negotiations are held in Paris between the Institute Pasteur, Dr Gallo and the CDC to arrange for a joint announcement of the discovery of the virus that causes AIDS.

**April 4:** New Zealand reports on its first AIDS death.

**April 7:** *The Lancet* publish an article from the Institute Pasteur showing the isolation of LAV in two siblings with haemophilia-B, one with AIDS, proving a long and variable latency period following infection. It also details how the Pasteur ELISA test is made and how it works.

**April 9:** In San Francisco after much media attention, public debate and attempts by officials to get the bathhouses to ensure that all sex within their premises is safe, city officials ban ‘high-risk’ sex within bathhouses, leading to many bathhouses closing.

**April 23:** At a press conference in Washington DC, Margaret Heckler, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, proclaims that Dr Robert Gallo, of the US National Cancer Institute (NCI), has discovered a retrovirus, that he calls HTLV-III, which is believed could be the cause of AIDS. She also announces the development of a diagnostic blood test to identify HTLV-III she says should be available within six

months and expresses hope that a preventive vaccine would be ready for testing within two years. The efforts of the Institute Pasteur are downplayed by Heckler and Gallo and the French scientists are understandably angry.

**April:** In the US the National Institute of Health applies for patents on Dr Gallo's antibody test, a diagnostic kit based on the ELISA technique.

**May 4:** *Science* magazine publishes four papers from Dr Gallo's laboratory demonstrating that the HTLV-III retrovirus is the cause of AIDS.

**May:** Private companies apply to the US Department of Health & Human Services for licences to develop a commercial test for AIDS, which would detect evidence of the virus in blood.

**June:** Bobby Goldsmith, a gay Australian champion swimmer dies of AIDS at age 30. The team of friends who supported him form a group originally called the *AIDS Home Support Service*, that later becomes the *Bobby Goldsmith Foundation*, a leading organisation in NSW providing financial and practical support for People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

**June:** Dr Robert Gallo and Dr Luc Montagnier hold a joint press conference to announce that Gallo's HTLV-III virus and Montagnier's LAV are almost certainly identical.

**June:** Abbott Laboratories receive virus cell culture from the NCI to begin work on creating a commercially available test.

**July 26:** *The Age* reports on the first case of AIDS from a blood transfusion in Australia, in Melbourne, in a heterosexual male blood recipient who is not a member of a high-risk group. It was found that the blood was donated by a gay man who did not consider himself 'promiscuous', which was the word Red Cross had used in their media releases. It is also revealed that additional units of the donor's blood had been used to produce Factor VIII for haemophiliacs which had been given to 28 children in Queensland.

**August:** The NSW Venereal Diseases Act is amended making category A and B AIDS notifiable diseases, bringing NSW into line with South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland and Victoria.

**August 31:** New South Wales decriminalises male homosexual sex for people over 18.

**September:** The NSW Community Support Network (CSN) is established to train volunteers to provide practical home-based care for people living with AIDS.

**September:** Researchers isolate a new type of retrovirus in the blood of macaques raised in captivity and suffering from symptoms similar to human AIDS. It is later named Simian Immunodeficiency Virus (SIV).

**September:** A meeting between NCI investigators and Burroughs Wellcome (now part of GlaxoSmithKline) pharmaceutical company is held to discuss plans to test the potential of existing drugs as retrovirus inhibitors. The outcome of this meeting is research and development of *zidovudine* or *AZT*, a failed cancer treatment, as the first anti-retroviral drug approved to treat AIDS.

**October 9:** In San Francisco, following investigations which show that high-risk sex continues to occur in bathhouses, city officials order the houses closed. New York and Los Angeles follow within 12 months. After the order, the San Francisco bathhouses collectively take legal action to reopen. A judge rules that they can stay open if they hire monitors and expel anyone engaging in high-risk sexual activity.

**October:** *The Medical Journal of Australia* publishes an issue on Living with AIDS, which (ironically) features a skull on the cover.

**October:** Abbott begins clinical trials of its HIV antibody test.

**October:** In a study using non-licensed tests for HIV, 500 gay men in Sydney are tested by Professor Ron Penny. The results suggest that 1 in 5 gay men may already be infected. Initial tests of 100 men in Melbourne suggest up to 24% may be infected.

**October:** Using non-licensed tests for HIV, tests of stored blood samples of haemophiliacs in a Melbourne hospital show at least 30% have HIV, with 60-70% of those who have been treated twice weekly with Factor VIII having HIV.

**October:** The national executive of the Australian Federation of Haemophilia begins alerting its state organisations when it realises that blood products have been contaminated.

**October:** The Commonwealth Government provides \$10,000 to test the blood of every haemophilic in Australia for HIV.

**October:** Ricky Wilson, guitarist for the band *the B-52s*, becomes the first well-known person to die of AIDS.

**November:** Australian blood banks introduce a declaration form to be signed by donors that states that the donor is not a member of a high-risk group.

**November:** NSW Police call for a halt in random breath testing, and then insist on being issued with plastic gloves, because they believe that AIDS can be transmitted by the saliva of motorists.

**November:** In Australia, the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories begin to heat treat Factor VIII, a treatment for Haemophilia, to prevent HIV transmission.

**November:** The NSW sperm bank call on gay men to donate, but the AIDS Action Committee quickly urges gay men not to do so.

**November 15:** Just two weeks prior to a National election, the Queensland Government announces the deaths of three infants and a further one sick, as a result of HIV contaminated blood transfusions from a gay man. A major media storm erupts.

**November 16:** In Sydney, following reports of blood being donated by a gay man and infecting children, a group of angry men roam Oxford Street bashing homosexuals and kicking in the doors of gay bars.

**November 16:** Queensland announces it will fine or gaol anyone who donates blood without declaring they belong to a high-risk group. Other States follow suit over coming months.

**November 17:** The Reverend Fred Nile declares that "the man who gave the blood that killed the three babies is as guilty of their manslaughter as if he had run over their pram in a car".

**November 17-19:** Some sections of the Australian media accuse gay men of knowingly spreading AIDS by the deliberate donation of contaminated blood.

**November 18:** In NSW, a blood bank director uses the anxiety fostered by the death of babies to lobby for funds for computer equipment to trace the distribution of blood products. He claims that gay men are spreading AIDS by the deliberate donation of contaminated blood "to get back at the world".

**November 19:** The Anglican Dean of Sydney, the Very Reverend Lance Shilton, accuses AIDS carriers of having blood on their hands and those politicians who voted for homosexual decriminalisation share the blame for the AIDS crisis.

**November 19:** A special meeting of Australian Health Ministers' Council is called. \$5m is allocated to AIDS services, including \$3.7m in grants to States for education, counselling and support services for people with AIDS. A National AIDS Task Force is established to advise the Commonwealth Government on the scientific and medical aspects of the virus. A National Advisory Committee on AIDS (NACAIDS) is established to advise on education, treatment and care and legal and health policy. It is agreed to adopt a uniform blood policy, preventing high-risk groups from donating blood, and pledges are made to fund to test blood as soon as a test becomes available. A national education campaign is also agreed to.

**November 20:** The Hon Bob Hawke MP, Prime Minister of Australia, calls on men who have had sex with another man in the last 5 years not to give blood and for women to donate blood urgently, due to a dropping number of donors.

**November 22:** The Queensland Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Peterson, says, "homosexuals indulge in dirty despicable acts that are beneath the level of animals".

**November 27:** Queensland amends its State Health Act allowing HIV infection to be defined as a venereal disease and thus subject to notification laws and penalties for transmitting venereal disease. Until this time, only AIDS was notifiable. For HIV a name and address is required in the notification.

**November:** In Sydney, the AIDS Learning Exchange, a community based peer learning and support group, is formed.

**November:** Sydney City Council begins a research program into the health and welfare needs of gay men and lesbians, the chief researcher becomes involved in the establishment of the Aids Council of NSW (ACON) from the Aids Action Committee.

**December:** At a General Meeting, The Victorian Aids Action Committee is renamed the Victorian AIDS Council. VAC also launches its first education campaign, 'Safe Sex' with a big red tick, with a poster, brochure and badge.

**December:** At a meeting of NACAIDS, the Haemophilia Foundation of Australia argues that its members living with HIV should be provided with financial assistance as "no fault" compensation.

**December:** Australian news media depicts sex-workers as a new high-risk group, despite the fact there are no cases of sex-work transmitted HIV at this time.

**December:** A meeting of the Australian Health Ministers' Council rejects calls to close gay saunas.

**December 12:** *The New York Times* reports on a lab worker with AIDS, who had no known high-risk factors for AIDS. The lab worker remembers getting a needle stick injury while drawing blood from a patient, which may explain the infection.

**December:** In the US, Abbot submits its HIV test for FDA approval.

**December 6:** At a meeting of retro-virologists at the NIH, the Institute Pasteur team present the genetic sequence (or genome) of LAV.

**December 17:** In the US, Ryan White is diagnosed with AIDS by a doctor performing a partial lung removal. White was infected with HIV from a blood product, known as Factor VIII, as part of his treatment for haemophilia which was given to him on a regular basis.

**December 19:** A meeting of National and State health ministers agree that HIV-positive test results are to be reported to state health authorities. The gay community is concerned that if individual details are to be reported, people will stop testing because of privacy concerns.

By the end of this year, there were a cumulative total of 9,801 cases of AIDS in the US, 108 in the UK and 49 in Australia.

### **1985: Antibody testing becomes publicly available**

In the UK, Dr Peter Jones, the Director of the Newcastle Haemophilia Reference Centre, tests 99 of his patients with severe Haemophilia. All but one has received commercial Factor VIII. 76 of the 99 test positive for HIV.

The first Australian AIDS Candlelight Vigil is held in Melbourne.

China's first AIDS case is reported in a traveller from abroad who died in Beijing.

NSW passes legislation that makes it illegal for a person with HIV to have unprotected sex with a partner who is unaware of the person's HIV status.

The US Congress allocates US\$70 million for AIDS research.

**January:** In the first study of its kind in Australia, homosexually active men are recruited from gay saunas to document their sexual practice and promote safe sexual activity.

**January:** The Australian Health Minister, Dr Neal Blewett, visits the US and UK and decides to adopt a policy approach involving affected communities, similar to that operating in San Francisco. On his return, he suggests that AIDS Action Committees incorporate so they can receive funding from the Government.

**January:** A Sydney based gay magazine, *Campaign*, begins a regular AIDS Watch column.

**January 12:** A public meeting to discuss how the Sydney gay community might mobilise and coordinate its response to the growing HIV/AIDS crisis leads to the AIDS Action Committee being incorporated and renamed the AIDS Council of NSW (ACON).

**January 21:** Institute Pasteur investigators publish the genetic sequence (or genome) of LAV in the Journal *Cell*, proving it is a very different virus from HTLV-I and HTLV-II.

**January 24:** NCI scientists and their collaborators publish the genome of HTLV-III in *Nature*.

**February:** The Sydney Gay Mardi Gras parade goes ahead, despite wide public calls for it to be banned. A report on the parade in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, which is largely fabricated and included false reports of HIV-positive spectators describing themselves as “elephant men”, is later the subject of a lengthy front-page retraction and apology.

**February:** Professor David Cooper and colleagues in Sydney’s St Vincent’s Hospital publish in *The Lancet* the first description of the sero-conversion illness associated with primary HIV infection.

**February:** Australian gay magazine, *Campaign*, runs an article suggesting that there is no way to stop lists of people who have tested HIV-positive leaking to government and non-government agencies, like welfare, employment and insurance agencies, which can have a great effect on the life opportunities of people with HIV/AIDS.

**February:** In the UK, firemen are told by officials at the Fire Brigade Union not to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to anyone who might be gay, in case it is possible for AIDS to be transmitted in this way.

**February:** In response to a request from US Congress, a report, “Review of the Public Health Service’s Response to AIDS,” is published by the Office of Technological Assessment, a non-partisan office designed to analyse complicated scientific issues. The report outlines the state of scientific knowledge, but, more significantly, is highly critical of the lack of federal support for research, in particular from the Department of Health and Human Services.

**February:** The NSW Health Department considers closing gay saunas and suspected sex on premises venues. The Sydney gay community successfully argues that closing venues removes the opportunity to use the venues as places for education and outreach.

**February:** The ‘*Rubba Me*’ campaign is ACON’s first large-scale safe sex campaign in sex on premises venues. This is funded by the Gays Counselling Service and the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation after the NSW Health Department is reticent to fund an explicit poster.

**February 26:** The Albion Street Centre officially opens in Surry Hills, Sydney as a centre for HIV treatment, testing and counselling. Surry Hills is a suburb in the area of Sydney where a majority of homosexuals lived and where the gay nightlife area was based.

**March:** It is conclusively established that LAV, discovered by Montagnier, and HTLV-III, discovered by Gallo, are the same virus.

**March 2:** The FDA licences the production of a commercial test by Abbot, using Gallo’s enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) test, allowing testing of blood for the presence of HIV antibodies. It is released in the US on March 7. It soon becomes available in Australia.

**March:** *The Age* newspaper in Melbourne calls for compulsory HIV testing of all Australians.

**March:** ACON receives its first government funding when the Commonwealth Health Minister grants it \$74,000, enough to cover one staff worker and rent for premises in Crown Street.

**March:** The Commonwealth Government extends Medicare to cover hospital costs for people with HIV.

**March 26:** The President of the Victorian AIDS Council, Phil Carswell, warns of the possibility of antibody apartheid developing in the gay community, where “negatives” would shun “positives” if widespread testing is encouraged and enacted. He recommends that instead of testing, all gay men should assume they are positive and practise safe sex.

**April:** Australia becomes the first country in the world to secure its blood supply from HIV infection by the testing of all donations. The voluntary exclusion of “high-risk groups” backed by punitive legislation for wrongful declaration also has the desired effect.

**April:** The Australian Prime Minister, State Premiers and Territory leaders meet solely to decide upon a national approach to rising usage of illicit drugs. This meeting becomes known as the Drug Summit and is the first time since the Second World War that Australia’s political leaders meet to discuss non-financial matters. “Harm minimisation” is approved and endorsed as the basis for Australia’s response to the abuse of illicit drugs.

**April:** Prof John Ziegler and colleagues at the Prince of Wales Children’s Hospital in Sydney publish in *The Lancet* the first detection of transmission of HIV from mother to child via breast milk.

**April 14-17:** The 1st International AIDS Conference is held in Atlanta, hosted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Over 2000 people attend. Major topics are testing, the international situation and heterosexual transmission. An international network of Collaborating Centres on AIDS is formed.

**April:** The Australian Health Minister, Dr Neal Blewett, makes the first major parliamentary statement on HIV/AIDS.

**April 21:** In New York, *The Normal Heart*, a semi-autobiographical play written by Larry Kramer, debuts, depicting the early years of the AIDS epidemic and the founding of Gay Men’s Health Crisis, the first AIDS activist organisation.

**May:** The Albion Street Centre, in conjunction with the AIDS Support Group originally set up by the Gays Counselling Service NSW, establishes the Ankali Project to provide emotional support to People Living With AIDS (PLWA). Its first coordinator, Reverend Jim Dykes, based the Ankali peer based support and guidance model on one developed by the Shanti Project in San Francisco, a support service for people with life threatening illnesses (originally cancer) which he visited. Ankali is the local aboriginal word for ‘friend’.

**May 10:** The CDC remove Haitians from their list of AIDS high-risk groups, in light of information that heterosexual contact and exposure to contaminated needles play a role in transmission of HIV.

**May:** The NSW Government introduces penalties for false declarations made by blood donors - \$12,000 or 12 months gaol.

**May:** The outgoing President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) issues a statement calling for non-discrimination and a national response to AIDS. This is the first statement by such a body in the world.

**May:** A meeting of the Australian Health Ministers’ Council endorses a National Health Strategy on AIDS Control. The total AIDS funding is now \$86m shared between the Commonwealth and the States.

**May 28:** In the US the National Institute of Health patent for Dr Gallo’s ELISA antibody test is approved, despite the Institute Pasteur’s patent application having been lodged in December 1983 before the NIH application.

**June:** Some Australian airlines ban people with HIV from travelling on their planes as a means of protecting their staff.

**June:** Two public meetings are held to obtain community support for ACON's constitution. Activist Lex Watson is elected the first President.

**June:** ACON holds its first major public activity, an AIDS conference jointly sponsored by the NSW Nurses Association at Westmead Hospital.

**June:** The Victorian Attorney General takes action to prevent a proposal which would deny surgery to high-risk individuals who refuse to take a HIV antibody test.

**June:** The CDC revise the case definition of AIDS to include additional specific disease conditions and to exclude people as AIDS cases if they have a negative result on testing for antibodies to HIV.

**June 15:** *The Lancet* publishes an evaluation of commercial AIDS screening test kits, which shows the first generation Gallo based Abbot test gives both false positive and false negative results and is not as accurate as test kits based on the Pasteur ELISA test.

**July:** In the US, United Press International reports that movie star Rock Hudson has AIDS. This leads to a frenzy of media reports and stories on AIDS.

**July:** The Albion Street Centre reports that over 2000 people have taken HIV tests in the first 5 months of testing being available. Of the first 1000 tests, 20% are positive.

**July:** The Australian Health Minister, Dr Neal Blewett, addresses the Gay Rights Lobby Annual Dinner and emphasises the role of cooperation between the gay community and government in confronting AIDS.

**July:** A toddler with HIV, Eve van Grafthorst, living in Gosford NSW, is banned from attending kindergarten after parents, fearing for their children's health, threaten to withdraw children from school.

**August 1:** *The New York Times* reports that US federal health officials have declared the nation's blood supply is free of the virus that causes AIDS.

**August 1:** *The New York Times* reports that HIV antibody testing kits can give false positive results to people without HIV. They report that the number of false positives have tended to decline each month as the laboratory technicians gained further experience with the tests. Some of the causes of false positive results with early tests included having: been in contact with malaria, had liver or rheumatoid diseases, had a recent flu or Hepatitis-B vaccine, used IV drugs or for women, had many children.

**August:** The first unsubstantiated case reporting a person contracting HIV from a sex-worker in Australia sparks another media storm about the HIV risk posed to society by sex-workers. [Note: in fact a report in 1991 states there were no cases to date of a female sex-worker transmitting HIV to a client in Australia].

**August:** The NSW Government considers compulsory HIV testing of all new and existing inmates in correctional facilities.

**August:** The NSW Government passes legislation to make HIV antibody test results notifiable. The immediate result is a substantial drop in attendance at testing centres by members of "high-risk groups".

**August 29:** Dr Julian Gold, Director of the Albion Street Clinic, argues that high-risk groups will only continue to use his facility if they are guaranteed total confidentiality and privacy and that the Albion Street Centre will not release records without patient permission.

**August 29:** Taylor Square Clinic, a Sydney private clinic with a large AIDS caseload and high number of gay clients, declares they will burn their records rather than release them to NSW Health without patient consent.

**August 30:** The NSW Premier, Neville Wran, warns that doctors who do not comply with new regulations face deregistration and a \$1000 fine for each offence.

**September:** Allegedly, many people take HIV tests using the name "Neville Wran".

**September:** In the US, teenager Ryan White, a haemophiliac with AIDS, is refused entry to school.

**September:** US military services begin testing for HIV among its personnel.

**September 3:** *The New York Times*, in an article *The New Plague in Perspective* reported that overwhelmingly new cases continue to be amongst drug users and homosexuals and while the number of cases in the rest of the public is growing, it remains at 1% of total US cases.

**September 4:** Eve van Grafthorst, the toddler with HIV living in Gosford NSW, briefly returns to kindergarten. This issue is reported widely in Australian media. Later, after a long battle against parents and school authorities, she and her family leave Australia to live in New Zealand. Eve dies in November of 1993.

**September:** At a press conference, President Reagan responds to a reporter's question about the need for more AIDS funding. Reagan accurately noted that the federal government had already spent more than half a billion dollars on AIDS up to this point. "So, this is a top priority with us," said Reagan. "Yes, there's no question about the seriousness of this and the need to find an answer."

**September:** The NSW AIDS Hotline, later the HIV/AIDS Information Line, is established at the Albion Street Centre. Over 1000 calls are taken in its first two weeks of operation.

**September:** Graeme Stewart and colleagues at Westmead Hospital in Sydney publish in *The Lancet* the first evidence of transmission of HIV by artificial insemination.

**September:** The Australian Health Minister, Dr Neal Blewett, rejects the calls of the Haemophilia Foundation of Australia for compensation for its members living with HIV, whom they argue contracted HIV through no fault of their own.

**October:** In the UK, blood banks begin to use antibody tests to screen donated blood.

**October:** ACON sets a precedent by running an information and condom distribution stall at Sydney's Sleaze Ball. These booths become an important service provided at every Sydney Mardi Gras and Sleaze party.

**October 2:** Rock Hudson dies of AIDS. Reported with this news is that over 180,000 Americans have been diagnosed with HIV. Hudson leaves US\$250,000 to set up the American Foundation for AIDS research and Elizabeth Taylor agrees to chair the new foundation.



**October:** NSW ALP Caucus meets with AIDS experts before making a decision on notification laws but does not include a representative of the gay community.

**October 28:** Network 10 airs a 1-hour TV special, *The Truth about AIDS in Australia*, which alleges that gay men are deliberately spreading AIDS.

**November 17:** Australia holds its first national AIDS Conference in Melbourne, with 200 delegates attending. At this meeting the state AIDS councils form a national peak body, the Australian Federation of AIDS Associations, which is later expanded to include representatives of injecting drug user and sex-worker organisations.

**November:** The Australian Prostitutes Collective (NSW) is funded by NSW Health to provide HIV prevention education to sex-workers in NSW, becoming the first sex-work organisation in the world to receive government funding, making Australia one of the few countries where sex workers successfully opened dialogue with government. Education had been going on for over 12 months in both NSW and Victoria, funded by membership fees and cash donations.

**November:** The Australian Health Minister, Dr Neil Blewett, sets up a Parliamentary Liaison Group on AIDS with members from each National political party to help ensure bipartisan support for the response to AIDS.

**November 22:** *Science* publishes the principal paper tying HIV to SIV, in this case found in green monkeys.

**December:** BGF starts their Foundation Housing Project to provide subsidised accommodation of people with AIDS.

**December:** The annual report of the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board lists complaints of discrimination based on AIDS for the first time.

**December:** An article in *The Lancet* announces a virus similar to both HIV and SIV in humans that does not test positive with the HIV tests available. This eventually leads to the discovery of HIV-2 and later to work describing different subtypes of HIV-1 (Groups M, O and N).

**December 12:** The Institute Pasteur files a lawsuit against the US National Cancer Institute to claim a share of the royalties from the NCI's patented AIDS test.

**December:** The publication of a finding that HIV is present in small quantities in saliva increases public fears about AIDS. [Note: HIV cannot be transmitted through saliva].

**December:** First Needle and Syringe exchange programs begin operating illegally in NSW.

By the end of this year, there were a cumulative total of 15,948 cases of AIDS reported in the US, 275 in the UK and 162 in Australia, more than 60% of which are in NSW.

### 1986: The virus that causes AIDS, receives its final name- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

In the US, the Justice Department rules that people with, or suspected of having, HIV may be legally fired.

Australian National and State government matched grants are used to fund State-based AIDS councils for education, support and care programs. Australia is considered by many to be at the forefront of work in HIV/AIDS prevention.

The Soviet Union reports its first case of AIDS.

The second type of HIV is announced, almost simultaneously, by the labs of Dr Max Essex at Harvard's School of Public Health and Dr Luc Montagnier of the Institute Pasteur in Paris. Both find the virus, eventually named HIV-2, in West Africans, but the American and French groups come to different conclusions about the virus's danger. Essex thinks the virus is the missing link between chimp viruses and HIV [which it is not] and that it is relatively harmless to humans, while Montagnier believes the new virus is highly lethal. It is shown that Essex's sample had been contaminated in his lab, so Montagnier is credited with the discovery of HIV-2 (in May). He is, however, wrong about how lethal it is, as HIV-2 appears to be both less virulent and less infectious than HIV-1, which makes up the bulk of the world's infections.

**January:** The Commonwealth Government fund the newly formed Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) as the national peak body representing community organisations working to prevent HIV/AIDS.

**February:** The Albion Street Centre (ASC) reports that more than 3500 people have taken a HIV test at ASC since the clinic opened.

**February:** The first UK Needle Exchange Program opens in the city of Dundee (Scotland).

**February 6:** President Ronald Reagan, who was good friends with Rock Hudson whom he met during their acting careers, gives his State of the Union address. He mentions the word "AIDS" five times, vowing to continue to fight AIDS and support AIDS research. He announces he has asked the Surgeon General to prepare a report for the American people on AIDS.

**March 7:** *The New York Times* reports that two groups of scientists from San Francisco and Boston have found HIV in vaginal and cervical secretions in women. It is the first time the virus has been found in female genital secretions and may explain how women can transfer HIV to men. Another implication of the research is that virus present in the birth canal may be transmitted to newborns during delivery.

**March:** The Commonwealth Government establishes the National Health and Medical Research Council Special Unit in AIDS Epidemiology and Clinical Research. In 1990 it is renamed the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research.

**March:** The first edition of *Frontline* is produced. It is a health promotion news sheet distributed to over 5000 people locally, nationally and internationally, though mainly through gay venues.

**April:** Macquarie University is funded for breakthrough social research, the *Social Aspects of the Prevention of HIV/AIDS* by Priscilla Pyett. It examines behavioural and social factors amongst Sydney gay men and men who have sex with men to monitor transmission trends.

**April 8:** In the US, Ryan White, an American teenager from Kokomo, Indiana, dies aged 18. He was a national celebrity and spokesperson for HIV/AIDS research and public education in the United States, following his expulsion from school because of his diagnosis in December 1984.

**April:** In Victoria, Fairfield Hospital staff provides the first training program for volunteers to care for people with HIV at home.

**April:** In the US, it is announced that up to 2,000 people with AIDS will be given experimental drug therapy under a Federal program. *Ribavirin*, *Zidovudine* and three other drugs would be among the first tested, along with cancer drugs such as *Interleukin-2*, which have been found to help rebuild the body's immune system.

**May:** In Australia, condom advertisements are first allowed on television, but only late at night.

**May:** ACON runs its first major safe sex education program, the *Stop AIDS Project*, after 6 months of planning and training. It includes a 15 minute video called *Do The Right Thing*, which receives an R rating from the Commonwealth Censor.

**May:** The International Committee on the Taxonomy of Viruses, rules that the names LAV and HTLV-III will be dropped and the virus will be known as the Human Immunodeficiency Virus or HIV.

**May 29:** *The New York Times* reports that according to a Federal study, the average time lag between infection with HIV and the onset of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome has been at least five years among people who developed the deadly affliction after receiving contaminated transfusions.

**June:** *Australia's Response to AIDS*, prepared by Margaret Duckett and detailing Australia's struggle to combat AIDS, is published.

**June 23:** WHO estimates there are 50,000 people with AIDS in eight central African countries.

**June 23-25:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> International AIDS Conference is held in Paris, France. The Director of WHO announces that as many as 10 million people worldwide could already be infected with HIV. A "second wave" of infection, amongst Injecting Drug Users and their partners is predicted. Accounts of rising rates of heterosexual transmission in the US, Europe and Africa are also reported.

**July 15:** The Australian Health Minister, Dr Neil Blewett, gives assurances that education programs would be given priority and appropriate funding, as the strategy to control the spread of AIDS and that HIV testing will remain voluntary and take place only in the context of informed consent and counselling.

**August:** The US Federal Government accuses a hospital of illegal discrimination against a nurse with AIDS. This is seen as a violation of his civil rights.

**August 18:** The Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act is enacted by U.S. Congress named in honour of Ryan White, an Indiana teenager who been diagnosed with AIDS contracted through a tainted haemophilia treatment, and was expelled from school because of the disease. The Act is the United States' largest federally funded program for people living with HIV/AIDS and sought to improve availability of care for low-income, uninsured and under-insured victims of AIDS and their families.

**September 19:** In the US, scientists announce that AZT (*Zidovudine*), a drug originally developed for cancer in 1964, appears to block the action of HIV's enzyme "reverse transcriptase". This prevents the virus from replicating in cells, slowing the course of HIV and delaying death. *Zidovudine* is in a class of drugs later called Nucleoside-analogue Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors (NRTI).

**October:** ABC TV screens the Geoffrey Robinson QC Hypothetical "Does Dracula Have AIDS?"

**October:** The Second National AIDS Conference is held in Sydney and has a strong emphasis on community based education and prevention programs.

**October 23:** In the US, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop releases a report, which is the first major US Government statement on AIDS. The report urges parents and schools to start frank, open discussions about AIDS.

**October 24:** The CDC report that although the incidence of AIDS is rising for all racial/ethnic groups and in all geographic regions of the US, the cumulative incidence of AIDS among blacks and Hispanics is more than three times the rate for whites.

**November:** 17% of PLWHA in the US are heterosexual injecting drug users.

**November:** In California, the La Rouche proposition to quarantine those infected with HIV is put to vote and soundly defeated.

**November 13:** The first pilot Australian Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) begins in Darlinghurst, Sydney, as a trial project of Dr Alex Wodak and the Alcohol and Drug program of St Vincent's Hospital. Illegal distribution by community based AIDS organisations in Sydney has been going on for almost a year.

**December:** A NACAIDS working group headed by Professor Ron Penny, reporting on data from the Needle Exchange Pilot, recommends that funds should immediately be made available for the urgent widespread introduction of needle exchange programs in all States and Territories.

**December:** In California, a second proposition calling for compulsory screening, notification and quarantining of HIV+ people is put to vote and again rejected.

**December:** Needle exchange begins in NSW pharmacies.

**December:** In the UK, there are 1,062 reports of HIV infection among haemophiliacs and transfusion and tissue transplant recipients.

**December 15:** *The New York Times* reports that despite warnings by the World Health Organization that Brazil could suffer an epidemic of AIDS, federal health authorities have been slow to respond with adequate prevention and treatment programs, according to state officials, doctors and homosexual groups. Brazil ranks third after the United States and France among countries with the largest number of AIDS cases.

By the end of this year, there were a cumulative total of 19,888 cases of AIDS reported in the US and 162 cases in Australia.

### 1987: First class of treatment drugs

It becomes apparent that more than half the people with severe haemophilia in Britain, France and West Germany are infected with HIV. In the US the figure is close to 100%. In Australia, where blood donations are not paid for, less blood is pooled and no blood imported to make Factor VIII, it is discovered that only 30% of haemophiliacs who received blood products between 1980 and 1984 became infected with HIV.

*"And the Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic"*, by investigative journalist Randy Shilts is published. The book makes an important contribution to documenting the early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the US, but not everyone agrees with the views and opinions expressed in the book.

The Sydney Needle and Syringe Program trial is reviewed and considered a success. It becomes NSW policy to provide free needles to people who inject illicit drugs as a way of minimising harm.

**February:** The National Centre for HIV Epidemiology and Research begins the first Australian clinical trial of *Zidovudine*, a promising anti-retroviral drug. The trial is a double blind control study and such was the desperation of some who were ill at the time that it is anecdotally reported that some participants in this trial shared drugs to try to ensure that all who shared were at least getting some of the drug and not relegated to receiving the placebo. From this point on, Australia will be on the frontline of treatment research.

**February:** Estimating that as many as 5 to 10 million people could be infected with HIV worldwide, the WHO launches its Global Program on HIV/AIDS.

**February 1:** *The New York Times* reports that despite vigorous opposition from civil rights groups and some state governments, insurance companies fearing an avalanche of AIDS-related claims, are increasingly asserting that they are able to require applicants for coverage to take the HIV test.

**February 4:** Flamboyant Emmy-award winning entertainer and pianist, Liberace, dies of AIDS. During the 1950s–1970s he had been the highest-paid entertainer in the world.

**March 1:** Dr Peter Duesberg, a respected biologist at the University of California, Berkeley, publishes a paper in *Perspectives in Cancer Research* suggesting that HIV is not the cause of AIDS, because a virus cannot cause a syndrome. Though his theories are not accepted by most of the scientific community, his work attracts the attention of South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki in the late 1990s.

**March 10:** A speech given by New York gay activist and playwright, Larry Kramer, leads to the formation of the radical group, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) in New York in response to proposed cost of *Zidovudine*. The price of *Zidovudine* is subsequently lowered and ACT UP chapters are formed around the world including Australia. ACT UP's slogan "Silence=Death" becomes an international symbol of AIDS activism

**March 19:** In the US, the FDA approve *Zerit (zidovudine or AZT)*, a Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor (NRTI) as a treatment for people with HIV following a successful clinical trial. The cost of a year's supply is proposed to be US\$10,000, making it one of the most expensive drugs ever sold.

**March:** *Zerit (zidovudine)* is approved as a treatment in Australia, with an agreement between the National and State governments to share costs and allocate the treatment via a quota system. This sets the pattern for funding on anti-retroviral treatments.

**March 31:** An agreement is announced by US President Ronald Reagan and French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac that a joint agreement settling the dispute about the patents for the ELISA HIV test has been settled, whereby the Institute Pasteur would end its court case regarding the patent for the HIV antibody test and would share the profits from the test with the US Department of Health and Human Services. This is the first international agreement relating to a biomedical research issue to be announced by heads of state. The press (wrongly) report that this ends the dispute about who first discovered the virus that causes AIDS, and that Institute Pasteur and the US Department of Health and Human Services have agreed that Gallo and Montagnier would be co-credited with the discovery.

**April:** The Commonwealth Government launches a \$2.9m national HIV/AIDS Education Campaign, spearheaded by the controversial *Grim Reaper* television commercial. This is the first campaign to directly target the issue of heterosexual transmission and transmission outside of "high-risk groups" generally. It scares many people in both high and low risk categories into taking HIV tests. It provokes a month long debate in the media. Following this;

- 10 million education booklets, *AIDS: The Facts Everyone Should Know*, are distributed nationally.
- The Albion Street Centre, and other testing sites around Australia, experience a large increase in the numbers of people requesting testing, many from low-risk groups.
- AIDS Information lines around Australia, many operated by NGOs, some with no funding, are inundated with calls from the public asking questions about AIDS.
- Public education continues with a TV commercial that alerts young people about the dangers of transmitting HIV through sharing injecting drug equipment, "sharing needles is like playing Russian roulette".

**April 29:** In the US, the FDA approve the Western blot blood test kit, a more specific test for HIV antibody proteins. It is soon adopted in Australia as the confirmatory test for a positive ELISA test result.

**April:** The Governor General of Australia, Sir Ninian Stephen, formally launches the AIDS Trust of Australia as a national charity to conduct fund-raising for a range of HIV/AIDS programs.

**April:** The NSW Government establishes a Ministerial Advisory Committee on AIDS, which includes community representatives.

**May:** In the US, the CDC report that between 1981 and 1987, nine health care workers caring for AIDS patients and having no other risk factors have been infected with HIV.

**May:** The Australian Federation of Aids Organisations (AFAO) releases the first edition of its media kit designed to assist journalists get the facts straight on HIV/AIDS.

**May 31:** US President Ronald Reagan gives his first detailed public speech on the topic of AIDS, at a dinner of the American Foundation for AIDS Research, focussing particularly on increasing routine and compulsory HIV testing.

**May 31:** New York radio station WABC airs a program where a San Antonio physician Eva Lee Snead, voices the idea that AIDS might have crossed to the human species via a contaminated polio vaccine, having arrived at the idea independently in the light of the SV-40 incident.

**June 1-5:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> International AIDS Conference is held in Washington. US Vice-President George Bush opens the Conference and is booed by the audience when he defends President Reagan's HIV testing proposals. At a protest demonstration outside the White House, criticising the Administration's policies, demonstrators are arrested by police who wear long yellow rubber gloves.

**June:** The US Public Health Service adds AIDS to its list of diseases for which people, on public health grounds, can be excluded from entering the US and in July the "Helms amendment" by Senator Jesse Helms, adds HIV infection to the exclusion list.

**June:** A documentary "*Suzi's Story*" about a woman and her son, both with AIDS, screens on Australian television. This program is another key event in raising community awareness about HIV/AIDS.

**June:** Australian National and State governments establish the Inter-Governmental Committee on AIDS (IGCA) to deal with issues that require a coordinated response from both levels of Government.

**July:** Australia hosts a WHO regional HIV/AIDS meeting. All South-East Asian and Pacific Countries attend. ABC TV's Four Corners program features Dr Jonathan Mann, Director of the World Health Organization's Global Program on AIDS.

**July:** WHO reviews the evidence and confirms that HIV can be passed from mother to child through breastfeeding. But they also recommend that in developing countries, mothers with HIV should still be encouraged to breastfeed, as in many circumstances safe and effective use of alternatives is not possible.

**July:** The Global Program on AIDS releases a report titled *Australia's Response to the AIDS Epidemic. A Model for Others*. It highlights Australia's successful prevention of the spread of HIV, via partnerships between governments and affected communities, as innovative and praises Australia's response as the best in the world, an excellent example for others to emulate.

**July 25:** Diana, Princess of Wales, opens the first specialist AIDS hospital ward in the UK. The fact that she does not wear gloves when shaking hands with people with AIDS is widely reported and she is credited with greatly changing public attitudes to people with HIV/AIDS.

**August:** In the US, the CDC revises its definition of AIDS to place a greater emphasis on HIV infection status.

**August:** The Commonwealth Government revises its HIV funding policy to the States, allocating \$20 million for 1987/88. The new formula takes into account population, number of AIDS notifications and the Aboriginal population of each State. 50% of funding is provided for education and prevention programs and the rest for non-hospital based care and support programs.

**August 18:** The first US clinical trial to test an experimental HIV vaccine in humans begins at the National Institutes for Health (NIH).

**August 18:** A home in Arcadia, Florida US, is burned down by arsonists after a judge rules that the family's three haemophiliac sons, who had all acquired HIV from tainted blood products, should be allowed to attend school. Ricky Ray dies of AIDS in 1992, and his brother Robert dies in 2000.

**October 11:** In the US, 650,000 lesbians and gay men march in Washington seeking equal rights for gays and lesbians.

**October:** The AIDS Memorial Quilt is displayed for the first time on the National Mall in Washington, DC. The Names Project was thought up by gay activist and HIV educator, Cleve Jones, in San Francisco in 1986, and also made the first panel of the Quilt in memory of his partner Mark Feldman.

**October:** As a result of a report from the NACAIDS Working Group on Gay and Bisexual men, the Commonwealth Health Department provides \$500,000 for programs specifically aimed at gay and bisexual men.

**October:** AFAO produces its first National AIDS Bulletin, a monthly magazine that provides news, research reports and articles on a broad range of HIV/AIDS issues.

**October:** In the US, Senator Jesse Helms is angered by an explicit safe sex brochure developed by Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York. He successfully calls for an amendment, which bans organisations using federal funds for any educational materials that "promote or encourage homosexual sexual activities." [This policy is still in effect].

**October:** AIDS becomes the first disease ever debated on the floor of the United Nations General Assembly. The General Assembly resolves to mobilise the entire United Nations system in the worldwide struggle against AIDS, under the leadership of the WHO.

**November:** Needle and Syringe Exchange Program officially begins in Victoria.

**November:** The first HIV/AIDS Day Care Centre opens in Australia.

**November:** In the UK, a documentary, *AIDS: the Unheard Voices* is broadcast where it is argued that HIV cannot be the cause of AIDS.

**November 12:** The American Medical Association issues a policy statement saying it is unethical for a doctor to refuse to treat someone solely because that person had AIDS or was HIV-positive.

**November 21:** In the US, the FDA licences *Intron-A* and *Roferon-A* (human alpha interferon injection) for the treatment of Kaposi's sarcoma.

**November 24:** An ACON organised rally is staged to draw attention to the critical shortage of funding for *Zidovudine* treatment for PLWHA, which at this time is a quota system that allows only a small number of people to be treated at the same time.

**November 26:** The NSW Minister for Health lifts the quota of people who can receive *Zidovudine* treatment by 20 places.

**November 28:** In the US, the FDA authorises pre-approval distribution of *Ganciclovir* under a treatment protocol for the treatment of cytomegalovirus retinitis in AIDS patients.

**November 30:** In the US, a *Newsweek* story *Some Encouraging News About AIDS* has CDC researchers reporting that while half of people with AIDS are dying within 2 years of diagnosis, at least 15% are living 5 years or more and 1-2% of people with HIV show no signs of deterioration at all.

**December:** ACON launches a major education campaign called "Have a Safe Sex Summer" which includes posters, leaflets, video ads and a float in the 1988 Mardi Gras parade. Summer has been identified as a high risk period of HIV transmission and it concentrates on safe sex, sex and alcohol/drug use and sex in relationships. The independent evaluation finds the campaign is extremely successful.

**December:** The CDC release the results of a study on the prevalence of HIV infection in the US, indicating a shifting emphasis toward defining AIDS as “infection with HIV” rather than by defining particular “indicator diseases” that characterises late-stage AIDS.

By the end of this year, in Australia there have been a cumulative total of 7,116 people have tested HIV-positive, with 797 diagnosed with AIDS and 429 deaths. 50,787 cases of AIDS have been reported in the US. 62,000 cases of AIDS are officially reported by WHO, from 127 countries, including France (2,523), Uganda (2,369) and Brazil (2,102), Tanzania (1,608), Germany (1,486), Canada (1,334), UK (1,170) and Italy (1,104).

## 1988

The NSW Users & AIDS Association (NUAA) is formed and funded as an independent, user-driven community based organisation educating, supporting and representing injecting drug users.

In New York, US, it is reported that for the first time, more HIV diagnosis are attributable to needle sharing than to sexual contact and 9% of street children are HIV-positive either because of sex work or injection drug use.

In the US, in an attempt to prevent transmission of HIV through drug use, the first official syringe exchanges in New York and San Francisco open. However, the government prohibits federal funding of these programs, with many State Governments criminalising such programs.

**January 1:** Australia adopts a new international definition of AIDS and HIV disease, in which patients with HIV are described as having AIDS if they contract one of the typical opportunistic infections of “AIDS defining illnesses”.

**January:** The CDC publish guidelines developed for educational efforts to combat AIDS. They also update the International Classification of Diseases codes for HIV infection for use with U.S. morbidity and mortality data.

**January 26-28:** A World Summit of Ministers of Health is held by WHO in London. Delegates attend from 148 countries (including 117 health ministers). WHO announce plans for a “World AIDS Day” to be held in December. One outcome of this meeting is the *London Declaration on AIDS Prevention*, which emphasises education and the need to protect the human rights and dignity of people with HIV.

**January:** The Australian Adult Video Industry Association releases a safe sex message and explicit condom demonstration to appear on all X and R rated videos.

**February 12:** In the US, *Trimetrexate* is the first AIDS drug granted pre-approval distribution status under new FDA regulations. The drug is used to treat Pneumocystis in AIDS patients who could not tolerate standard treatments.

**March 26:** The first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras is held, previously Gay Mardi Gras.

**March:** The Australian National Council on AIDS (ANCA) is established to replace NACAIDS and the National AIDS Task Force. ANCA comprises experts in public health, science, law, education and representatives from the community sector. [Note, sometime soon after this, an ANCA subcommittee on intravenous drug use looks into the possibility of one-use syringes being used for the needle and syringe program, without consulting injecting drug using groups. The idea is eventually abandoned due to community opposition and limitations including cost and the fact that it cannot stop the sharing of needles and will actually increase risk if sharing occurs].

**March:** In the UK, Margaret Thatcher’s conservative government passes an amendment to the Local Government Act called Section 28. It prohibits local authorities from promoting homosexuality in any way or providing funding for any group to do so. This has an enormous detrimental effect on HIV/AIDS education efforts in the UK.

**March:** A code of practice on life insurance is drawn up between the Commonwealth Government and the Life Insurance Federation of Australia. However getting non-discriminatory policies for PLWHA and people from high risk groups remains a concern.

**March:** A group of doctors in Perth, led by Dr Eleni Papadopulos-Eleopulos, publish their first article questioning whether HIV causes AIDS.

**April:** The US NIH report that between 1981 and 1988, two workers in laboratories producing large quantities of HIV for research, have been infected with HIV, and it issues bio-safety recommendations for laboratories.

**May:** Australia’s second national HIV/AIDS awareness campaign begins with the launch of the “*Beds and Feet*” TV commercials. This campaign is targeted primarily at young heterosexually active people. Campaigns are also developed targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. “Condoman” makes his first appearance promoting the use of condoms.

**May:** The US launches its first co-ordinated HIV/AIDS education campaign, with the distribution of 107 million copies of a booklet, *Understanding AIDS*. It is the single most widely read publication in the US in June 1988, with more than 86 million readers.

**June:** The American Medical Association urges GPs to break confidentiality and warn the sexual partners of people being treated for AIDS.

**June:** Qantas is the first airline to adopt progressive employment policies for employees with HIV infection.

**June:** The CDC report that a new AIDS case is reported in the US every 14 minutes.

**June 12-16:** 4<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference Stockholm, Sweden.

**July:** The new Liberal (conservative) NSW Government elected in March re-introduces Summary Offences legislation making outreach programs working with male and female sex workers problematic.

**July:** The NSW AIDS Hotline begins offering a toll free service allowing easier access for people in rural areas of NSW.

**August:** Australia holds its third National Conference on AIDS in Hobart. In the closing session, a US activist, Chris Carter, calls for all people have HIV to come out, speak openly and challenge stereotypes. Large numbers of PLWHA take over the stage of the conference.

**August:** The first Needle and Syringe program in North America is established in Tacoma, Washington.

**August:** Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Brian Burdekin, launches the AFAO/ACON produced legal guide “AIDS and Your Rights” for people with HIV, health workers and others affected by HIV/AIDS.

**August 14:** Associated Press reported that a Miami psychologist, Larry Harmon, says a new kind of hypochondriac has been spawned by AIDS: people who are convinced they have the AIDS virus despite medical evidence to the contrary. He labels this “AFRAIDS,” which

stands for 'acute fear regarding AIDS'. Symptoms of anxiety and depression, such as weight loss, fatigue, or reduced resistance to disease, are interpreted by AFRAIDS afflicted people as signs of AIDS. Even monthly blood tests for as long as a year have failed to ease the fear in some of these people, who are so terrified they often avoid sex with their spouses and lose concentration at work. Harmon reports that the problem often is rooted in guilt over an extramarital affair, a visit to a prostitute, or a homosexual experience.

**August 20:** The Victorian AIDS Council publicly reverses their anti-testing stance, as treatment options are now available.

**September:** The US National Institute of Dental Research investigators report that saliva actually inhibits the transmission of HIV.

**September 28:** A meeting at the Trade Union Club in Surry Hills, Sydney results in PLWA (NSW) Coalition being formed. This later becomes PLWHA (NSW) Inc. [Note: renamed Positive Life in 2010].

**September:** The Australian AIDS Memorial Quilt project is established and first displayed on World AIDS Day on December 1.

**September:** Australia records its 1,000th case of AIDS. 500 Australians have died from HIV/AIDS since the first case was notified in late 1982, approximately the same number of Australians that died in the Vietnam War.

**October:** In the US, more than 1000 ACT UP demonstrators virtually shut down operations at the FDA headquarters in protest at the slow pace of drug approval for new HIV drugs. Eight days later the FDA announces new regulations to speed-up drug approvals.

**October:** The first national conference for sex-workers, *Sex Industry and the AIDS Debate*, is held in Melbourne, organised by the Prostitutes Collective of Victoria. Sex-worker organisations are formed in those states that do not have one and Scarlet Alliance is set up as the peak body representing sex-workers.

**October:** Members of the Tasmanian Homosexual Law Reform Group (established in April) are arrested at the directive of Hobart City Council. The Council revokes their license to have a stall in Salamanca Place, but the Group refuse to move resulting in over 130 people being arrested over 2 months.

**October:** The first Australian national conference for PLWHA, the *Living Well* Conference, is held.

**November:** The first Australian conference for people with haemophilia and HIV/AIDS is held.

**November:** A CDC study reports that 3 of every 1,000 US college students are HIV-positive.

**November:** An AIDS policy proposal is presented to Australian parliament, in an attempt to develop a national strategy to curb the spread of AIDS, which has caused the death of 540 Australians in the past 5 years. The policy suggests testing all the population and the permanent quarantining of anyone who tests positive for the virus.

**November 21:** The FDA licenses *Intron A* and *Roferon A* (human alpha interferon injection) for the treatment of Kaposi's sarcoma.

**November 28:** The FDA authorises pre-approval distribution of *ganciclovir* for the treatment of cytomegalovirus retinitis in AIDS patients.

**December 1:** The first annual World AIDS Day is held, after being proposed by WHO to focus attention on fighting the disease. Australia participates. Theme is "*A World United Against AIDS*".

**December 1:** *The Lancet* publishes a report on an Australian study of male and female prostitutes that shows very low rates of condom breakage. The researchers say the remarkably low rate of breakage indicates that condoms offer a very high degree of protection from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, at least in the specialised environment studied.

**December:** First issue of *Talkabout*, the Newsletter of PLWHA (NSW) is published.

**December:** The Australian Minister for Health admits that a small-scale pilot AIDS screening project had been conducted in 1986/87 targeting African immigrants. None tested HIV-positive.

**December:** The Australasian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM) is formed.

During this year in Australia, 1,297 people test positive for HIV, 536 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 223 die.

## 1989

The Australian National AIDS Education Campaign is widened, with brochures and videos being produced in 12 community languages for people of non-English speaking background and a booklet on caring for a person with AIDS at home is developed for AIDS carers who lack medical and nursing training.

The Commonwealth Government establishes the Commonwealth AIDS Prevention and Education Program and the Commonwealth AIDS Workforce Information, Standards and Exchange Program.

ACON promote information that oral sex without a condom is OK after it is confirmed that HIV is not be passed on by saliva and that digestive acids kill HIV. [It should be noted that there are reports of people contracting HIV from oral sex].

Queensland allows needle and syringe exchange programs to begin, after having trialled an earlier system of having them prescribed by doctors since 1987.

In the US, AIDS activists stage several major protests about HIV/AIDS drugs during the year, including at the Golden Gate Bridge, the New York Stock Exchange, and US headquarters of drug company Burroughs Wellcome, (now part of GlaxoSmithKline).

Using a newly available tool, Dr David Ho and virologist Dr George Shaw independently measure the amount of virus in the blood of a person with HIV. The tests show that, contrary to the belief that HIV lays dormant for a period of time, there are millions of virus particles found in the blood, even in the earliest weeks of infection when the person does not show any symptoms of AIDS. This discovery will have implications for the way scientists think about treatment options.

**March:** The Australian AIDS Memorial Quilt is displayed in Parliament House, Canberra.

**April 2:** In the US, Hans Verhoef, a Dutch man with HIV travelling en route to the International Lesbian/Gay Health Conference is jailed in Minnesota under the federal law banning travellers entering the US.

**April 3:** An ABC television drama, *GP*, airs an episode dealing with the possibility of discrimination resulting from a non-consensual blood screening of surgery patients, presenting a case strongly against compulsory screening.

**April:** First reports of resistance to *Zidovudine* monotherapy.

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**April:** Australian Medical Association calls for compulsory HIV testing of all elective surgery patients.

**May:** People Living with HIV/AIDS (NSW) receives its first government funding for a part-time Administrator and part-time Newsletter Coordinator.

**June 20-24:** 5<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference, *The Scientific and Social Challenge of AIDS*, is held in Montreal, Canada. A protest about the US law banning travellers with HIV, is held, when 250 protestors with placards storm the stage. ACT UP New York releases proposals for "parallel track" development of drugs. Zambia's President Haunda, speaking at the Conference, calls on all governments to make AIDS the number one health issue.

**July:** Australian media run stories about a sex-worker with HIV, "Sharlene" who has allegedly had unsafe sex with clients. The media calls for sex-workers with HIV to be removed from the industry.

**July:** NSW Health detains Sharlene at the Prince Henry Hospital, using a section of the *Public Health Act* that gives the Department the right to detain an infectious person with no grounds for appeal. Police are unable to charge Sharlene as they have trouble proving she had unprotected sexual intercourse.

**July:** The NSW Minister for Health, Peter Collins, supports the detainment of Sharlene and appeals to the public to assist the Department in identifying individuals with HIV who engaged in sex-work so that they can be stopped from working. He tells state parliament that Sharlene is a sex worker and heroin addict who knew she was infected and who encouraged her patrons to have sex without condoms because she wanted to become pregnant.

**July:** Sex-worker organisations are unhappy with the NSW Health Minister's call to ban sex-workers with HIV from working, as this directly opposes the principles of the National HIV/AIDS strategy recently announced by the Commonwealth Government. They are also upset that the Minister did not stress the need for clients of sex-workers to take responsibility for their own health, nor acknowledge that clients sometimes offered sex-workers more money to forgo the use of condoms.

**July 21:** PLWHA NSW, the organisation representing people who have HIV, is incorporated.

**August:** The Commonwealth Government launches the first National HIV/AIDS Strategy, a policy framework on AIDS. The strategy aims to eliminate transmission of the virus, and to minimise the personal and social impact of HIV. Central to the policy is the belief that people with HIV/AIDS have the right to participate in the community without discrimination.

**August:** Doctors warn the NSW government they could be instituting a dangerous precedent by continuing to hold the sex worker with HIV, "Sharlene" in custody.

**August:** The media report that NSW health officials have advised that the HIV-infected prostitute they call "a walking time bomb" has left detention in a hospital and moved into hiding in an unnamed religious order.

**August 7:** The Haemophilia Foundation of Australia launches a public campaign for compensation for its members living with medically acquired HIV.

**August:** There are more developments with respect to treatment, when the results are announced of a major drug trial of *Zidovudine* showing it can slow progression to AIDS in individuals with HIV who have no symptoms.

**September:** AFAO reverses its anti-testing stance because of developments with treatments and with the assurance of forthcoming National and State legislation to ensure test results remained confidential and to protect the rights of people with HIV in cases of discrimination.

**September:** ACON and ANCA devise the first community education campaigns that inform PLWHA, and those with risk factors that have not tested for HIV, of the benefits of early treatment.

**September:** A gay American man with HIV is refused a visa to visit Australia to compete in the World Champion Bridge Tournament by Australian immigration officers. The Commonwealth Minister for Health, Dr Neal Blewett, intervenes and overturns the decision.

**September:** NSW resident, Simon Ferguson loses a case before Equal Opportunity Tribunal after being refused surgery at Rachel Forster Hospital in Redfern in 1985 because of his presumed HIV-positive status.

**September 28:** In the US, the second drug for the treatment of AIDS, *Dideoxyinosine (sometimes called ddI)*, is made available to some people with AIDS on limited compassionate access grounds for those whose treatment had failed using *zidovudine*, even though only preliminary tests had been completed.

**October:** ACON is the first AIDS Council to employ a multicultural HIV/AIDS Project Officer to produce a range of materials for non-English speaking men who have sex with men.

**October:** Western Australia decriminalises male homosexual sex for people over 21.

**November:** The Commonwealth Government announces a seed grant for a fund to provide financial assistance with medical and travel costs for haemophiliacs living with medically acquired HIV.

**November 19:** The Chicago Tribune publishes a 16 page account of the discovery of HIV and conclude that while the mysteries of what exactly went on in the lab of Dr Gallo may never be known, the evidence is compelling that either accidentally or deliberately, Gallo's lab misappropriated the French virus LAV.

**December 1:** In Sydney, 1500 people attend a candlelight memorial parade on World AIDS Day. International theme is "*Our lives, Our World. Let's Take Care of Each Other*".

During this year in Australia, 1,227 people test positive for HIV, with 614 diagnosed with AIDS and 403 deaths.

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1990

Australian National Centre for HIV Social Research is established at Macquarie University. [Note: this is later moved to University of NSW].

Australian education campaign targets recreational intravenous drug users, with the “*Be Safe, Be Sure*” campaign. It links unsafe drug use and sexual transmission.

There are reports of many children in Romanian hospitals having been infected with HIV through multiple blood transfusions and the reuse of needles.

UK Prime Minister, John Major, announces that his government will pay £42 million compensation to haemophiliacs infected with HIV and their dependents.

Queensland decriminalises male homosexual sex for people over 16 (18 for anal sex).

In both the US and the UK, there begins to be more discussion about whether there will ever be a heterosexual epidemic because of the lower risk of female-to-male transmission of HIV.

Scientists from Fairfield Hospital in Melbourne publish findings from two studies looking at HIV resistance to the drug *Zidovudine* during treatment. The studies show that HIV in some people who take *Zidovudine* develops resistance to the drug and then seems to lose that resistance when treatment is stopped.

**January:** Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission empowered to investigate complaints of discrimination against homosexuals and people with HIV in employment.

**January 16:** In the US, the FDA halves the recommended dose of *Zidovudine*, the only drug with approval for the treatment of AIDS, after concluding that the lower dose is just as effective and causes fewer side effects.

**January:** In the US, as a result of the November 19 *Chicago Tribune* article, the newly formed Office of Scientific Integrity opens an investigation into Dr Gallo’s early AIDS research seeking to clarify: whether LAV was grown or used in Gallo’s Lab, whether contamination of Gallo’s cultures occurred, and the details relating to the invention of the HIV blood test including whether the Gallo ELISA was developed using material obtained from another laboratory.

**February:** The National People Living with AIDS Coalition, NPLWAC (later renamed the National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS or NAPWA) is formed as the peak non-government organisation representing people living with HIV/AIDS in Australia, with member organisations from each State and Territory.

**February:** Second Living Well conference is held in Sydney.

**February:** In China, 146 people in Yunnan Province near the Burmese border are found to have HIV infection due to sharing needles. This shocks public health officials in China, as it is not known whether this is the first sign of an epidemic or an isolated outbreak.

**March:** The head of WHO AIDS program, Jonathan Mann, resigns in protest against the failure of the UN, and worldwide governments, to respond adequately to the exploding HIV pandemic. During Jonathan Mann’s leadership, WHO AIDS program became the largest single program in the organisation’s history.

**March:** A paper is published in the *Journal of Virology* showing that an unusual human retrovirus has been isolated from two patients with persistent generalized lymphadenopathy who originate from West-Central Africa and are currently residing in Belgium. Although the virus is similar to HIV-1 and HIV-2, significant antigenic and protein differences can be demonstrated. The data also indicates that the new virus seems more closely related to HIV-1 than to HIV-2. This paper leads to the naming of HIV-1 Group O in 1994 and to a new name for existing HIV-1 strains, HIV-1 Group M (for main or major).

**April:** Public meeting forms ACT UP Sydney, initially to lobby for increased access to treatments and speeding up drug trials.

**April 27:** ACT UP Sydney holds a “Die-In” demonstration outside the Australian Drug Evaluation Committee’s Sydney office in Kent Street, to protest at the lack of treatment access.

**April:** The Mark Fitzpatrick Trust is established by the Commonwealth Government to provide financial assistance for medically acquired HIV. Virtually all states and territories also move in this direction, resulting in the concept of “innocent” and “guilty” HIV infected people.

**May 1:** Scientists report new evidence that antibodies can apparently prevent transmission of HIV from mother to foetus and subsequent development of the disease in the baby. The evidence seems to explain why some babies born to women infected HIV develop the infection while others do not.

**May:** ACT UP chapters established in Canberra and Melbourne.

**May 11:** In the US, the film, *Longtime Companion* is released. It chronicles the first years of the AIDS epidemic as seen through its impact on several gay men and the heterosexual female best friend of one of them. Although lacking big name stars and on limited release, it is financially successful.

**May:** The Australian Minister for Health, the Hon Brian Howe MP, announces a review to examine delays in the approval of new drugs and clinical trials.

**June:** In NSW, legislation is passed to introduce compulsory antibody testing for prisoners.

**June:** In the UK, a TV program, *The AIDS Catch*, questions whether HIV is the cause of AIDS and whether AIDS is infectious or not. The program provokes a hostile response among the AIDS community and organisations, with some people feeling that the program is sensationalist in tone, and that it contains many factual inaccuracies. It is also felt that the program caused significant distress among people with HIV and undermines the efforts carried out in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention.

**June 20-24:** 6<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference, *AIDS in the Nineties. From Science to Policy*, San Francisco, US. Numerous Australian and overseas organisations boycott the conference, protesting against US immigration travel restrictions that discriminate against people



with HIV/AIDS. After this Conference, the International AIDS Society (IAS) announces that no IAS sponsored conference will be held in a country that restricts the entry of HIV infected travellers.

**June:** 7 people are arrested at an Australian ACT UP rally outside the US Consulate to protest travel restrictions against people with HIV.

**July:** A NSW Prison Officer at Long Bay Gaol is infected with HIV after being deliberately jabbed with a blood filled syringe.

**July:** The Victorian AIDS Council (VAC) becomes embroiled in a controversy about a poster, "*When you say yes...*" promoting safe sex to young gay men who are struggling with, or afraid to accept, their sexual orientation. The poster has two fully clothed young gay men kissing with text about safe sex.

**July:** In the US, the CDC reports on the possible transmission of HIV to a patient through a dental procedure. The dentist had been diagnosed with AIDS three months before performing the procedure. The investigation does not identify any other relevant risk factors or behaviours that could have put the patient at risk of HIV infection. Eventually 6 patients are discovered to have been infected with very similar strains of HIV as the dentist.

**August 9:** Groups of medical practitioners, churches and community organisations meet to condemn the VAC poster campaign.

**August:** The extensive media coverage of the VAC poster results in wide coverage of the issue on television and results in than 250 young men becoming involved in the VAC "young and gay" peer education program.

**August:** *Zidovudine* is approved in Australia for treatment for people with HIV who have a clinical diagnosis of having less than 500 T-cells, ending quota systems.

**August:** Canberra hosts a four-day conference on AIDS in Asia and the South Pacific sponsored by the World Health Organization and the Commonwealth Government. About 600 delegates from 30 countries attend. The topics include prostitution, religion, education, and ethics in AIDS prevention and control.

**September 12:** Advertising Standards Council bans the VAC poster from appearing in all publications under its jurisdiction.

**September:** Trials of *Dideoxyinosine* (ddi) commence in Australia, with the Albion Street Centre being the first to use the drug.

**October:** The NSW government reviews the *Public Health Act*, and makes changes which allow a person with HIV, deemed by the state to be behaving irresponsibly and risking the lives of others, to be detained for up to six months without a hearing or right of appeal.

**October 26:** In the US, the FDA approve the use of *Zidovudine* for paediatric AIDS.

**November 1:** *The New York Times* reports that having other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis or herpes or coming into contact with both HIV and another STI at the same time, increases the risk of contracting HIV by up to 10 times.

**November:** Third Living Well Conference held in Adelaide for people with HIV/AIDS.

**November:** Australian National Council on AIDS (ANCA) Working Party on Treatments recommends sweeping changes to Australia's system of drug approval and marketing.

**December:** Australia's first "Buyers Club", to help people with HIV import drugs that are otherwise unavailable to them in Australia, is formed in Sydney.

**December:** First successful Australian case of a haemophilic with medically acquired HIV suing a hospital for negligence.

During this year in Australia, 1,138 people test positive for HIV, 673 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 515 die.

### 1991

ACON produces a HIV anti-discrimination campaign poster suggesting that if patients are to be compulsory tested for HIV then surgeons should also be tested for HIV and other diseases and provide copies of these test results to patients before operating on them.

The Commonwealth Government launches the first national HIV/AIDS education policy. "*AIDS Education: The Next Three Years 1991-1993*".

The UK experiences its largest peak in requests for HIV testing after a character, Mark Fowler, in the BBC television series, *East Enders*, is diagnosed as HIV-positive on the show.

The Australian "*Travel Safe*" campaign is launched, a national program directed at international and Australian travellers.

Wellcome Australia (now part of GlaxoSmithKline) is the first pharmaceutical company in Australia to conduct a campaign jointly with AIDS councils. The campaign targets HIV testing and early treatment.

Ten years into the epidemic, a survey conducted by the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health in Canberra finds that people have more sympathy for those whose lifestyle leads to heart, lung or liver disease, than for people with HIV/AIDS.

Both AFAO and the IGCA pass resolutions that support the right for sex-workers with HIV to continue working.

In Victoria, there are huge public protests against the possible closure of Fairfield Hospital, which continues to provide care for people with HIV/AIDS in a non-stigmatising way.

**January:** The Commonwealth Government accepts a limited number of recommendations from the ANCA Working Party on Treatments. This includes commissioning a further enquiry by Dr Peter Baume, an ex-Liberal Party Senator.

**January:** The reference book *Australian HIV Legal Guide*, a resource for lawyers and people working in the HIV/AIDS field, is launched.

**February:** The Commonwealth Government launches a national campaign to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS among gay and bisexual men. "*That Feeling Doesn't Stop HIV: Safe Sex Does*".

**February:** The Albion Street Centre becomes an outpatient clinic of Prince of Wales and Prince Henry Hospitals. The Centre's primary focus moves from mainly testing for HIV, towards one of multidisciplinary treatment and support for people living with HIV.

**March:** Commonwealth Government enlists Dr Peter Baume to hold a review of the process by which pharmaceutical drugs are approved for medical use. It is hoped the inquiry will streamline the approval process.

**March:** A Canadian drug company challenges Burroughs Wellcome in a Canadian Court over Wellcome's patent of AZT. The challenging company claims it can produce *Zidovudine* at a third of Wellcome's price.

**March 28:** The Red Ribbon is launched as the international symbol of AIDS Awareness, and is first seen on television at the Tony Awards in New York.

**March 30:** The sex worker with HIV, Sharlene, appears in NSW Central Court charged with assaulting and attempting to cause a policeman to contract AIDS, after police attend and break up an argument she and her boyfriend were having in a hospital.

**May 20:** Western Australia pays out \$5.4 million in compensation to people infected with HIV through medical treatments and procedures, the first Australian state to do so. [Note: all other Australian states soon follow suit, except NSW who fight on for some time, before making lower payments than other states].

**May:** The media reports that Australian men who pay for sex with women in Southeast Asian countries have a one in 30 risk of exposure to HIV, according to an Australian HIV Surveillance Report. The rapid spread of HIV among bar girls and sex workers in Thailand, the Philippines, and other countries in the region puts Australian men who go on sex tours at risk of HIV from heterosexual contact.

**June:** In the UK, results of a study carried out in 1990 are published which found that 20% of gay and bisexual men attending Sexual Health Clinics in London were infected with HIV. Outside of London the figure was 4%.

**June 6:** ACT UP holds "D-Day" demonstrations around Australia to protest at the time being taken by the review of drug approvals. Includes a protest at Parliament House Canberra where the House is disrupted during question time, a die-in is held outside Perth's health department, the Minister for Health's office is splattered with red paint and Melbourne's floral clock is torn up and replanted with crosses.

**June 6:** Two Australians who work in the HIV sector, Andrew Carter, the Founding member of the Australian AIDS Memorial Quilt Project, and Keith Harbour, a former president of the Victorian AIDS Council, both of whom are outspoken gay men with HIV/AIDS, are made members of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. It is sad that both die within 2 months.

**June 16-21:** 7<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference, *Science Challenging AIDS*, is held in Florence, Italy. The theme is "Science Against AIDS".

**July:** First Australian Positive Women's Conference is held in Sydney.

**July:** The Baume Report, *A Question of Balance*, recommends far-reaching reform of Australia's pharmaceutical licensing system and the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

**August:** ACT UP members demonstrate against Australia's drug approval system at the 4<sup>th</sup> National Australian AIDS Conference in Canberra.

**August:** The NSW Anti-Discrimination Board holds an enquiry into HIV-related discrimination, which produces a report, *Discrimination: The Other Epidemic*.

**August:** The CDC in the US redefines conditions for an AIDS Diagnosis to include people with HIV that have fewer than 200 T-cells.

**September:** The decision is taken to hold the 1992 International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam, rather than its planned location in Boston, following the American administration's decision not to lift entry restrictions on travellers with HIV.

**September 16:** The *New York Times* reports on a leaked draft copy of the report of the Office of Scientific Integrity into Dr Gallo's early AIDS research, with the headline "Censure is urged for AIDS scientist".

**October 9:** In the US, the FDA approve *Videx (didanosine or ddI)*, a NRTI, as a treatment of HIV/AIDS. This is the second drug to treat HIV.

**October:** The NSW Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues releases findings into its enquiry into medically acquired HIV. The report recommends the establishment of a financial assistance scheme limited to those who were directly infected through medical procedures in public Hospitals.

**November:** In France, haemophiliacs who became infected through infected blood products sue leading medical and government officials. They accuse the blood transfusion centres of allowing the use of HIV-contaminated blood, even though tests to screen blood for HIV and techniques to destroy the virus in blood products were available.

**November 7:** American basketball star Earvin "Magic" Johnson announces that he has HIV, becoming the first major celebrity to acknowledge contracting the virus through heterosexual sex. He says "We think only gay people can get it, it's not going to happen to me, and here I am saying that it can happen to anyone". He leaves the Lakers Basketball team and founds the Magic Johnson Foundation to help fight AIDS.

**November 23:** Freddie Mercury, the lead singer with the rock group Queen, confirms that he has AIDS, and just a day later it is announced that he has died.

**December 1:** World AIDS Day theme is "*Sharing the Challenge*".

**December:** An American ethics scholar, Louis Pascal, argues in a working paper published at the University of Wollongong, that HIV/AIDS may have originated from contaminated polio vaccines, based on his research begun four years earlier that looked at similarities in where early infections in Africa occurred and where experimental live polio vaccines were tested in Africa in the late 1950s.

**December:** Australia approve *Videx (didanosine also known as ddI)* within six weeks of its approval in the US under the changed system for drug evaluation and approval. It is only the second HIV anti-retroviral drug to be approved in ten years.

**December:** The Victorian State Government announces a compensation package for people with medically acquired HIV whose cases have a good chance of succeeding should they be taken to court.

During this year in Australia, 1,062 people test positive for HIV, 789 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 585 die.

## 1992

The National AIDS Archive Collection is established at the Australian National University.

**January:** The ACT Government legislates to make it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of HIV/AIDS infection.

**February:** WHO sets as a priority target for prevention by the year 2000, that all people at risk of HIV in Africa and Asia live in communities where condoms are both readily available and affordable.

**February:** Following news that Magic Johnson may compete in the US basketball team, the International Olympic Committee rules that athletes with HIV are eligible to compete in Olympic competitions.

**March:** The first National Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Conference, *Everybody's Business*, is held in Alice Springs, Northern Territory.

**March 7:** A letter to *The Lancet* by Walter S Kyle, an attorney and a mechanical and electrical engineer, suggests that HIV may have been introduced to humans in US in the 1970s via the Sabin Oral Polio Vaccine if it was used to treat recurrent herpes in homosexuals, as it had been suggested as a treatment for herpes in 1974 by dermatologist Adolph Tager. Sabin's OPV is known to have infected many with Simian Virus 40 in the 1950s and had detectable amounts of Simian type C Virus in the 1970's.

**March:** On discovering that 2 of his nephews have HIV, Professor Fred Hollows publically accuses gay men of adopting policies and practices that recklessly endanger the lives of thousands by allowing the continued practice of unsafe sex in the community.

**March 19:** In the music magazine *Rolling Stone*, an article written by investigative journalist Tom Curtis, proposes a hypothesis that the origin of AIDS may have been African green monkeys used in the CHAT Oral Polio Vaccine Trials which he says was given to at least 325,000 and perhaps more than 500,000 people in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Rwanda from 1957 until 1960. In response, lead researcher of the CHAT vaccine program, Dr Hilary Koprowski, successfully sues *Rolling Stone* and Tom Curtis for defamation and *Rolling Stone* publish a retraction.

**April 2:** In the US, ABC Television program *Prime Time Live* reports on the rise and fall of Dr Robert Gallo, and his taking credit for discovering HIV saying "It may be the greatest scientific fraud of the twentieth century".

**April:** The NSW Anti-Discrimination Board releases its report on HIV/AIDS related discrimination, "*Discrimination – The Other Epidemic*", which makes 72 recommendations and calls for changes to the Act to ban discrimination on grounds of HIV.

**April 8:** Tennis star Arthur Ashe, a former United States Open and Wimbledon champion, announces that he has been infected with HIV as a result of a blood transfusion in 1983. He dies less than a year later.

**June:** In France, the trial of four health care officials accused of allowing the distribution, between 1980 and 1985, of blood products known to be contaminated with HIV, begins. The former Director of the Transfusion service and the former head of research at the transfusion centre are both sentenced to four years in prison. A third defendant is given a four-year suspended sentence whilst a fourth is acquitted.

**June 18:** Australian singer Peter Allen dies from complications due to AIDS.

**June 19:** The first combination drug therapies for HIV are trialled in the US after the FDA approve the use of *Hivid* (*zalcitabine* sometimes called *ddC*), a NRTI class drug, for use in combination with *zidovudine*.

**June:** The Queensland Government legislates to make it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of HIV/AIDS Infection.

**July 19-24:** 8<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference, *A World United Against AIDS*, is held in Amsterdam, Netherlands. At this conference 5 cases of "AIDS" without HIV-1 or HIV-2 infection are described. By 1993, 47 cases had been reported to the CDC and enough clinical differences between these cases and AIDS result in the description of a new disease called Idiopathic CD4+ Lymphocytopenia (ICL). Idiopathic means if unknown cause. ICL does not appear to be caused by a transmissible agent, such as a virus. It is widely believed that that there may be more than one cause. AIDS Denialists have claimed that this proves HIV does not cause AIDS.

**July:** First International Positive Women's Conference is held in Amsterdam.

**September 26:** In the US, Magic Johnson resigns from the National Commission on AIDS, writing a letter to President Bush saying that the Administration has "utterly ignored" the commission's recommendations and "dropped the ball" on AIDS.

**October:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> HIV antiretroviral drug, *Hivid* (*zalcitabine*), is licensed for use in Australia.

**October:** It is reported in *The Lancet*, that scientists in Sydney have found five people who were infected with HIV by blood transfusions from one donor and have not developed any evidence of illness 7 to 10 years later, suggesting that it may be a non-virulent strain. The donor has also remained a symptomless. It is the first report to suggest that non-virulent strains of HIV continue to be non-virulent after being transmitted to other people, but it is not clear whether the donor or any recipients will eventually develop AIDS because the time for progression from infection to disease is so variable.

**October:** An Australian company Kia-Ora in conjunction with a range of key organisations including ACON and the Family Planning Association develop "Glyde Dam: Lollies", based on dams used for dental care. These are specifically designed for safe sex purposes with a larger, thinner latex barrier.

**October 5:** In the US, the FDA approve *Zerit* (*stavudine* or *d4T*) an NRTI class drug, for compassionate access and investigational use.

**November:** Release of final report of the Legal Working Party of the Inter-Governmental Committee on AIDS (IGCA).

**November:** 5th National Conference on HIV/AIDS is held in Sydney.

**November 3:** Bill Clinton is elected US President, the first to be elected on a campaign platform that includes HIV and AIDS issues, such as targeted and honest HIV prevention, an increase in the HIV research budget and an end to discrimination against immigrants with HIV.

**December 1:** World AIDS Day theme is "*AIDS: A Community Commitment*".

**December:** Report evaluating the First Australian National AIDS strategy is published.

During this year in Australia there are 1,027 people who test HIV-positive, 836 diagnosed with AIDS and 597 deaths.

## 1993

A South Australian teacher wins a landmark case in the Equal Opportunity Tribunal which finds that the state Department of Education had illegally discriminated against him because he is gay and has HIV.

Tasmania legalises the exchange of needles and syringes, the last Australian state to do so.

*A Kid Called Troy* is shown on Australian TV. Troy is the son of Suzi (from *Suzi's story* 1987). The program documents his struggle with his health and school as he battles with HIV/AIDS.

**January:** The Commonwealth Government launches its HIV/AIDS Anti-Discrimination Campaign. This is the first campaign of its type in the world, targeted at reducing discriminatory behaviour towards people on the grounds of their known or imputed HIV status. The campaign theme is "*HIV doesn't discriminate, people do*".

**January:** The CDC expands the definition of AIDS to include a person with HIV infection and a CD4 cell count below 200. The CDC estimates that the expanded definition could increase cases reported in 1993 by approximately 75%.

**January:** It is reported that some people with AIDS already have resistance to the drug *Zidovudine* even though they themselves had never taken the drug.

**January 6:** The Russian ballet star Rudolf Nureyev dies. His doctor says that "he died from a cardiac complication following a cruel illness", but it is widely reported that he is thought to have died from AIDS.

**March:** The Australian Disability Discrimination Act makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of known or imputed HIV status in the areas of housing, employment, education and the provision of goods and services.

**March:** In the US, the House of Representatives vote overwhelmingly to retain the ban on the entry into the country of people with HIV.

**March:** Scientists announce that HIV hides in lymph nodes and similar tissues early in the course of infection.

**April:** European Ministers of Health and Finance from 39 countries meet in Riga, Latvia, to launch an initiative to contain the spread of HIV in Central and Eastern European countries.

**April:** Tony Kushner's play, *Angels in America*, about homosexuality and AIDS in the 1980s wins the Pulitzer Prize. The play also wins a Tony Award in June.

**April:** The preliminary results are published of a large clinical trial of *Zidovudine* known as Concorde, where the results are interpreted as meaning that *Zidovudine* is not a useful early therapy for people with HIV who have not developed symptoms.

**April:** In the UK, comedian Kenny Everett and Holly Johnson, former lead singer with the group Frankie goes to Hollywood, announce that they are have HIV.

**April 18:** The Victorian AIDS Council's Positive Living Centre is opened in St Kilda. It is a centre for people with HIV to access meals, massage, learning activities and social space.

**June 6-11:** 9<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference Berlin, Germany. The general feeling of the meeting is one of disappointment about the increasing number of infections. The message shared by the people who attend is, once again, to put more money and efforts into effective prevention of HIV/AIDS.

**June:** An AFAO funded national advertising campaign aimed at young gay men generates substantial media interest.

**October:** Launch of Australia's Second National Strategy on HIV/AIDS by the Minister for Health, the Hon Graham Richardson MP. It maintains the goals and policy directions of the first Strategy.

**October:** In the US, the FDA approve the use of the drug *3TC (lamivudine)*, a NRTI, to be used in compassionate therapy in people who have not responded to other AIDS treatment or who are not eligible for clinical trials.

**November:** ACON introduces a policy promoting the use of dental dams for safer oral sex.

**November:** The NSW Government's amendments to the *Anti-Discrimination Act* which disallow vilification because of actual or perceived homosexuality are passed and come into effect in March 1994.

**December 1:** World AIDS Day theme is "*Time to Act*".

**December 1:** In Paris, Benetton in collaboration with ACT UP place a giant condom over 22m high and 3.5m wide on an obelisk in Central Paris in order to awaken the world to the reality of the disease.

**December 6:** In Melbourne, the first person is charged for deliberately donating blood whilst being aware they are HIV-positive and making a false statement on their blood donation declaration. He is sentenced to 16 months imprisonment.

**December:** A report in *The Lancet* reveals that four women became infected with HIV after minor surgery on the same day at a private practice in Sydney in 1989. This is the first published report of patient-to-patient transmission of HIV.

**December:** The film "*Philadelphia*" starring Tom Hanks, based on a true story of a lawyer with AIDS, premieres.

During this year in Australia, 888 people test positive for HIV, 836 diagnosed with AIDS and 691 die.

## 1994

*Anwernekenhe*, the first National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Gay men and Transgender Sexual Health Conference is held in Arrernte Country in Central Australia, the Northern Territory.

Using *AZT/zidovudine* to reduce the transmission of HIV from pregnant women to unborn foetuses is recommended in the US after a study shows it reduces the rate of maternal transmission to 8%. In women taking a placebo the rate is 25%.

The National Health Monitoring and Maintenance Program targeting people with HIV commences.

The Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) in Victoria is accused of breaking confidentiality of a man who has HIV. Inquiry called into existing CES guidelines.

**January:** The Tri-state project in Central Australia begins. It is an integrated STD/HIV treatment and education program working with Aboriginal communities in SA, NT and WA.

**February:** Randy Shilts, a US journalist who had covered the AIDS epidemic for some years, and author of the book, "*And the Band Played on*", dies.

**February:** A pilot study announces that a new blood test can predict progression from HIV infection to AIDS earlier than standard measures. The test measures the amount of HIV replicating in certain cells in the blood (Viral Load).

**February:** The first campaign promoting the right of people who have HIV, to have sex is run by ACON.

**March:** Australian Minister for Health, Graham Richardson, threatens to cut funding to the National AIDS Bulletin following the publication of articles on positive sexuality with a provocative cover. The matter is eventually resolved.

**March:** Actor Tom Hanks wins an Oscar for portraying a gay man with AIDS in *Philadelphia*.

**March:** First issue of *POZ Magazine* published.

**March:** The Australian HIV Surveillance Report reveals that two Australian men have been diagnosed positive for HIV-2, a strain of the virus that is widespread in West Africa but rare in Australia. To date, the only other Australian to be diagnosed with HIV-2 is a migrant from West Africa. The report also highlights that the number of women with HIV is climbing rapidly.

**March:** Articles are published in the *Journal of Virology* announcing a new type of HIV-1 named 'group O' (for outlier) following work first announced in 1990. [Eventually it is shown that the ancestor of group O is from chimpanzees from a different area to the SIV ancestor for group M, suggesting it was probably transmitted to humans completely separately to group M].

**March 11:** US CDC report that heterosexually acquired cases of AIDS rose 130% from 1992 to 1993, while cases among gay men rose 87%.

**April:** A report on HIV law reform in NSW by former Senator Chris Puplick, "The Courage of our Convictions" is released and calls for a dramatic overhaul of laws which hinder the provision of HIV/AIDS services and education.

**April:** A UN Human Right Committee decides that the Tasmanian Liberal Government contravenes a human rights treaty signed by Australia, by maintaining anti-gay laws.

**June:** The Commonwealth Government runs its HIV/AIDS discrimination campaign for a second time.

**June:** It is reported that a large European study on mother to child transmission has found that a mother with HIV who has a Caesarean section has half the rate of HIV transmission to the child during birth.

**June:** 12 years after the discovery of HIV, the US Government launches its first national media campaign explicitly promoting condoms. The TV advertisements focused on the use of condoms, which are rarely seen or even mentioned on American TV.

**June:** In the UK, the Department of Health vetoes an AIDS campaign, developed by the Health Education Authority, a government funded body, promoting safe sex and condoms, developed at a cost of £2 million, on the grounds that it is too explicit.

**June:** The US NIH AIDS Research Advisory Committee meets to decide whether to fund large-scale Phase III trials of Genentech's gp120 vaccine. Media reports in the previous month had wrongly suggested that the vaccine had infected volunteers during Phase II trials, which is impossible because it contained no live virus. Activists argue that funding the trials would divert funds from treatment research. After a contentious hearing, the committee decides not to fund the Phase III trial even though a subcommittee had recommended moving forward. The announcement dampens enthusiasm for vaccine research, and Genentech abandons its HIV vaccine research entirely.

**June 24:** In the US, the FDA approve *Stavudine*, an NRTI, for treatment of adults with HIV infection who no longer respond to or are intolerant of other antiviral drugs.

**July 12:** It is widely announced in the worldwide press that following many investigations into who developed the ELISA test for HIV first and which virus was used to develop the test, the US and France alter their 1987 patent settlement in favour of France's Institute Pasteur.

**August 7-12:** 10<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference, *The Global Challenge of AIDS: Together for the Future*, Yokohama, Japan. It is the first of the International Conferences to be held in Asia. No major breakthroughs emerge, and it is announced that future international conferences would now held every second year.

**September 17:** Health officials in Melbourne order a man who has HIV be detained in a hospital after the man violated two restraining orders by engaging in behaviour that placed the public at risk.

**October:** The Russian Parliament votes to adopt a law making HIV tests compulsory for all foreign residents, tourists, businessmen and even members of official delegations.

**October:** ACON's Euthanasia Working Group publishes "Choosing to Die", a discussion resource about making the decision to euthanize. The initial print run is exhausted within a fortnight. The book stirs major media interest and brings the euthanasia debate to the fore.

**November:** "Don't Leave Me This Way. Art in the Age of AIDS" exhibition at the Australian National Gallery, Canberra. The exhibition is funded from Commonwealth education program funds.

**December 1:** World AIDS Day theme is "AIDS and the Family".

**December:** The Commonwealth Government passes the *Human Rights (Sexual Conduct) Act* that enshrines the right to sexual privacy, overriding Tasmania's anti-gay laws.

**December:** Californian researchers announce they have found the cause of Kaposi's sarcoma, a human herpes virus (HHV-8) and that it can be sexually transmitted.

**December:** The Commonwealth Government appoints Professor Richard Feacham as the evaluator of the Second National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

**December:** President Clinton asks US Surgeon General, Joycelyn Elders, to resign, after she suggests that school children should be taught about masturbation, amongst other strategies to help stop the spread of HIV. Gay activists defend the Surgeon General, criticise the President's record on AIDS and express fear that the action will discourage other government leaders from speaking frankly about AIDS.

During this year in Australia, 817 people test positive for HIV, 962 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 738 die.

### 1995: Second class of treatment drugs

One million cases of AIDS have been reported to WHO, with estimates of 19.5 million people having been infected with HIV since the epidemic began.

WHO Global Program on AIDS is closed after being criticised for doing too little at grass roots level and concentrating too much on the medical and vaccine issues.

The Commonwealth Government funds a major initiative aimed at schools, launching *Out in the Open. HIV/AIDS and STD Resources for Secondary Schools*.

Dr David Ho and Dr George Shaw independently discover that from the moment of infection, the immune system is engaged in an ongoing battle with HIV. By giving new drugs called protease inhibitors to AIDS patients, both doctors learn that, within two weeks, the virus becomes resistant to the drugs. They then measure virus reproduction rates and find that between 100 million and 1 billion new virus particles are produced daily. They also learn that T-cells are reproducing at a rate of 1 billion per day and that the battle between the immune system and HIV could go on for 10 years or more before a person experiences the opportunistic infections associated with AIDS.

**January 28:** The CDC announce that in the US, AIDS has become the leading cause of death amongst all Americans aged 25 to 44. The biggest increase is reported among "men of colour" who have sex with men.

**February:** US Scientists announce they have found that a protein in human saliva blocks HIV from infecting human cells in the test tube.

**February:** Second Positive Women's Conference, at which, ACON launches its first published HIV/AIDS information for lesbians.

**March:** The 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference for People Living with HIV and AIDS is held in Cape Town, South Africa, the first time that the annual conference is held in Africa.

**March 30:** Scientists in California report that a child infected with HIV at birth seems to have successfully cast off the infection by the age of 1, but some other experts doubt that the case has been fully proven.

**May:** The Northern Territory passes the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act giving the terminally ill the right to medically assisted suicide.

**June:** ACON joins the national euthanasia debate launching its Voluntary Euthanasia Bill.

**June:** Governor-General, Bill Hayden, draws praise and criticism from politicians, church leaders, and homosexual and medical groups following a speech supporting gay marriages and adoptions, and euthanasia. Hayden also calls for the routine HIV testing of homosexuals before undergoing surgery, a move welcomed by physicians but rejected by homosexual groups. The AFAO says that universal safety precautions should be a sufficient safeguard for health professionals.

**June:** In the US, the FDA approve compassionate and research access to *saquinavir*, the first in a new class of drugs called "protease inhibitors" which is said to be some of the most hopeful news in years for people living with AIDS.

**August:** It is reported that in Tanzania, treating people for sexually transmitted diseases, such as gonorrhoea, substantially reduces people's risk of becoming infected with HIV.

**September:** The Feacham report, *Valuing the Past... Investing in the Future*, is delivered to Prime Minister Paul Keating.

**September:** Two clinical trials show that combining *Zidovudine* with *Dideoxyinosine* or *Zalcitabine* is more effective than using *Zidovudine* alone in delaying disease progression and prolonging life.

**October:** A support group, *Straight Arrows*, is launched for Victorian heterosexual men with HIV.

**October 27:** In the US, health officials report that a 91-year-old Florida man became infected with HIV after a prostitute whose gums were bleeding bit his hand during a fight with the prostitute. It is thought that the bite tore skin from the client's hand and she then bled into the wound. Although there is apparently only one previous case on record of the HIV being transmitted through a bite, health officials do not believe the new case will significantly change the way scientists think the disease is spread.

**November:** Doctor Nick Duncan and colleagues at the Macfarlane Burnet Centre in Melbourne demonstrate that the less virulent strain of HIV-1 uncovered in 8 Australians by Learmont in 1992 is due to a deletion in the "nef" gene, suggesting the possibility of a live attenuated vaccine.

**December 1:** World AIDS Day theme is "*Shared Rights, Shared Responsibilities*".

**December 1:** Nelson Mandela calls on all South Africans to speak out against the stigma, blame, shame and denial that have thus far been associated with this epidemic.

**December:** Acting Defence Minister, Gary Punch, announces that individuals with HIV/AIDS and some other chronic diseases are to be prohibited from joining the Australian military. Punch says the proposed new measures will also exclude the defence forces from anti-discrimination laws to guarantee that military personnel were of "the highest medical standard." Punch says that the Commonwealth Government is not discriminating against people with HIV/AIDS, noting that the prohibition also includes diseases such as Hepatitis-B and C, asthma, diabetes, gout and recurrent migraines.

**December 6:** In the US, the FDA approve *Invirase (saquinavir)*, a protease inhibitor, in combination with other nucleoside analogue medications. This application received approval only 97 days after FDA received the application for marketing.

**December 15:** In San Francisco, in a radical cross-species experiment, scientists inject bone marrow removed from a baboon into a 38-year-old man with AIDS. The hope is that the millions of transplanted marrow cells, which are believed to be resistant to the HIV, will proliferate and rescue the man's severely damaged immune system.

**December 22:** *The New York Times* reports that the US Centres for Disease Control have published the findings of the study it has conducted with British and French health officials that shows that the drug *Zidovudine* appears to reduce the risk of infection with HIV substantially for health workers who are accidentally stuck with needles or other sharp instruments.

During this year in Australia, 928 people test positive for HIV, 811 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 654 die.

### 1996: Third class of treatment drugs & viral load testing become available

"Triple combination therapy" which is using three anti-retroviral medications from two drug classes in combination, is introduced and becomes the new standard of HIV care.

The International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), a non-profit organisation based in New York City, is set up to speed the search for an HIV vaccine.

A slowing of the infection rate is reported in some countries due to safe sex/safer injecting practices. However, worldwide the infection rate continues to grow rapidly, with 90% of all people infected with HIV now living in the developing world.

**January 1:** WHO Global Program on AIDS is replaced by UNAIDS a combination of WHO, UNICEF: a Children's Fund, UN Population Fund, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UN Development Program and the World Bank.

**January:** Legislation in Victoria makes it illegal to discriminate on the grounds of HIV/AIDS infection.

**February:** The drug *Lamivudine* approved for use in Australia and subsidised in July under the Highly Specialised Drugs Program.

**March 1:** In the US, the FDA grants full approval for *Norvir (ritonavir)* for use alone or in combination with nucleoside analogue medications in people with advanced HIV disease. *Ritonavir* also received accelerated approval for less advanced HIV disease.

**March:** A Coalition Government is elected to the Australian Parliament. This is the first time that a non-Labor Government has been in power since the beginning of the epidemic in Australia.

**March:** A group of scientists report the discovery of the human gene that encodes the CCR5 chemokine receptor. Using the receptor is one of two ways that HIV is able to enter human cells.

**March 13:** In the US, the FDA approve *Crixivan (indinavir)*, a protease inhibitor, for use alone or in combination with nucleoside analogue medications in people with HIV or AIDS. FDA approved the drug in just 42 days after receiving its application for marketing.

**April:** Dr Gallo acknowledges that the electron micrograph images used in his May 4 1984 Science article were actually pictures of LAV.

**June 3:** In the US, the FDA approve a viral load test, a new test that measures the amount of HIV in the blood, only 7 months after the test is submitted for approval.

**June:** Two groups independently report that the CCR5 chemokine receptor is a co-receptor that HIV uses to infect immune system cells.

**June 21:** In the US, the FDA approve *Viramune (nevirapine)*, the first Non-Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor or (NNRTI) drug.

**June 21:** In Victoria, despite years of protest action, Fairfield Hospital is officially closed. The Alfred Hospital and the Royal Melbourne Hospital officially take over the HIV/AIDS services.

**July 7-12:** 11<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference, *One World One Hope*, in Vancouver, Canada highlights significant advances in treatments including protease inhibitors, a new class of anti-viral drugs; benefits of early intervention and combination therapy; and viral load testing which can measure the concentration of virus particles in the blood. At the conference, Dr David Ho from New York speculates that 2 to 3 years of continuous treatment with combinations of these drugs may clear the virus completely from people's bodies. [Note, this is later found not to be the case].

**August:** Crixivan (*indinavir*) and Norvir (*ritonavir*), additional protease inhibitor drugs, are approved for use in Australia.

**August:** Scientists identify the Delta32 version of CCR5. A second group of scientists finds that people who have two copies of Delta32 seem to remain uninfected even after multiple exposures to the HIV virus.

**October:** In Washington DC, the US AIDS Memorial quilt is displayed in its entirety for the last time. It is also the first time that a display of the quilt is visited by an American President.

**November:** The 6<sup>th</sup> National Conference of PLWHA is hosted by NAPWA in Sydney. A dedicated Indigenous stream is introduced and attracts significant participation by Aboriginal people at the conference.

**November:** *The White Death*, by respected Australian science journalist Julian Cribb, is published. The book examines and advances on the Oral Polio Vaccine Theory for the origin of AIDS.

**December 1:** World AIDS Day theme is "*One World. One Hope*".

**December:** *Science* magazine hails Dr Robert Gallo's discovery that natural compounds known as chemokines can block HIV and halt the progression of AIDS, as one of the year's most important scientific breakthroughs.

**December:** "*Partnerships in Practice*", the Third National HIV/AIDS Strategy based on the evaluation of the second National Strategy by Professor Feacham, is announced by new Liberal-National Government Minister, Dr Michael Wooldridge and extends the successful approach to HIV to other blood-borne diseases such as Hepatitis-C and Sexually Transmittable Infections. Additional funding is not however forthcoming. There are also indications of a HIV epidemic among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

**December:** The Australian National Council of AIDS and Related Diseases (ANCARD) is formed to replace ANCA.

**December:** The first-ever US AIDS strategy is announced by the White House. It calls for many changes including, sustained research to find a cure and a vaccine, a reduction in new infections, guaranteed access to high quality care for AIDS patients, and fighting AIDS-related discrimination.

**December 16:** A year after an AIDS patient in San Francisco received an experimental transplant of baboon bone marrow, it is reported that the patient has gained weight and strength and remained free of severe infections, even though the transplant did not take.

**December 30:** HIV/AIDS researcher Dr David Ho is named Time magazine's "Man of the Year" for 1996 for pioneering significant advances in the battle against HIV/AIDS, particularly in the promising area of early intervention and combination therapy with protease inhibitors. During this year in Australia, 900 people test positive for HIV, 670 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 516 die.

### **1997 – Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) becomes available, first single tablet containing 2 NRTI drugs approved**

Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy (HAART), consisting of three or more anti-retroviral drugs, replaces the expression "triple combination therapy" and becomes the new standard of HIV care in response to the call to the "hit early, hit hard" strategy.

For the first time since the AIDS pandemic began, the number of deaths from the disease drops substantially across the US, due to the introduction of HAART.

Side effects, such as lipodystrophy, of the new drug regimes start to be more widely apparent. Drug resistance is also becoming a concern.

UN announces that 40 million children will have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS by 2010.

Tasmania is the last Australian state to decriminalise male homosexual sex, for people over 17.

**January:** Condoms are made available to all NSW prisoners after successful trial of condom vending machines.

**February:** The Australian Minister for Health, Dr Michael Wooldridge announces interim funding arrangements that will allow free access to viral load testing for all Australians living with HIV.

**March:** The Australian Parliament overrides the Northern Territory *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act*, removing the right of the terminally ill to 'medically assisted suicide'.

**March 14:** In the US, the FDA grants accelerated approval for *Nelfinavir* the first protease inhibitor intended for use in children as well as adults.

**March:** In Cyprus, a Cypriot fisherman, Pavlos Georgiou, is convicted of infecting his British lover, Janette Pink, during a holiday romance.

**April 4:** In the US, the FDA approve *Rescriptor (delavirdine mesylate)*, a NNRTI, under accelerated approval rules.

**May:** US President Bill Clinton announces that the development of a preventative vaccine for HIV is to be a top national priority.

**June 10:** *The New York Times* reports on the availability of HIV Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) as a morning after treatment for the prevention of HIV, whereby HIV drugs are given to people that might have been exposed to HIV through sexual contact or through needle sharing by injecting drug use. The HIV drugs are given to people at the earliest possible time after the risk exposure.

**July:** Australia's Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee recommends that HIV antiretroviral drugs be made available to children and people with HIV at an earlier stage of disease.

**July:** In the US, the CDC report that it is likely that there had been a case of transmission of HIV as a result of "deep kissing", although other routes of transmission could not be completely excluded. The man with HIV is reported as having sores in his mouth and gums that regularly bled, and his female partner also had gum disease with inflamed and sore areas in her mouth.

**July 9:** *The New York Times* reports that a new study has found that when men are infected with HIV and another sexually transmitted disease, like gonorrhoea, their semen contains about eight times as much HIV as is found in semen of men who do not have dual infections.

**September 26:** In the US, the FDA approve *Combivir*, which is a combined form of are two previously approved NRTI antiretroviral drugs, *zidovudine* and *lamivudine*, in one tablet for the treatment of HIV-1.

**October:** South Africa passes new laws that enables the Government to introduce "compulsory licensing," or the ability to manufacture drugs locally; and allows "parallel importation", or the ability to purchase drugs from the country selling them at the lowest price.

**November:** UNAIDS Director, Peter Piot, releases estimates that 30 million adults and children worldwide now have HIV. Another 16,000 are being infected every day.

**December 1:** World AIDS Day theme is "*Children Living in a World with AIDS*".

During this year in Australia, 824 people test positive for HIV, 395 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 244 die. The National Centre in HIV Epidemiology estimates there are around 11,150 people living with HIV in Australia.

## 1998

Unpleasant side effects of HAART, including nausea, kidney failure, changes in body shape, and hallucinations, are being seen in many patients taking the medications. Unusual side effects, such as the growth of fatty pads and heart problems, are occurring in some users of protease inhibitors. Several reports also indicate growing signs of treatment failure. Adherence to the complicated treatment regimes that characterise HAART become a major concern for the HIV/AIDS community and health care professionals.

Responding to pressure from activists and the international community, Glaxo Wellcome (now part of GlaxoSmithKline) cuts the price of *zidovudine* by 75% after a trial in Thailand showed its effectiveness and safety in preventing mother-to-child transmission in developing countries. However, even with this price cut it is expected that the drug will still be far too expensive for use in many developing countries.

Two teams of researchers begin developing vaccines, targeted against the strains of HIV prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa.

A HIV strain resistant to all protease inhibitor drugs currently on the market is found in San Francisco.

The first national study of Australians living with HIV/AIDS, *the HIV Futures Study*, is launched. It takes a more holistic approach to the impact of HIV on people's lives. The report covers health, medical treatments and complementary therapies, sex and relationships, involvement in the HIV and gay communities, housing, and employment in the lives of people with HIV.

The Victorian AIDS Council supports the case of Matt Hall, a football player banned from playing by the Victorian Amateur Football Association because he has HIV. Matt takes his case to the Civil and Administrative Tribunal and eventually wins re-instatement as a player.

The first national report on women living with HIV/AIDS, *Standing on Shifting Sand*, is launched as part of Positive Women Victoria's 10th Birthday celebrations.

**January:** In the US, Dr Richard Schmidt, a doctor from Louisiana, is found guilty of infecting a sexual partner, a nurse called Janice Trahan, by injecting her with HIV+ blood. Trahan alleged that Schmidt had injected her with the blood of one of his positive patients in an act of vengeance after she tried to end their relationship.

**January 13:** On appeal, a Federal court upholds the Australian armed forces' right to expel soldiers with HIV, saying it is justified because of the inherent risk of bloodshed, and infection, during military duty. The case followed a complaint from a soldier who was expelled a month after he enlisted in November 1993 after a routine test showed he is infected with HIV.



**February:** Scientists announce that a comparative analysis of a blood sample preserved since 1959 from the oldest documented case of HIV infection with more recent samples of HIV suggest that the first such infections probably occurred in people in the late 1940s or early 1950s, about a decade earlier than many estimates.

**April:** In the US, the Clinton Administration refuses to lift a 10-year ban on using federal funds for needle exchange programs, despite conclusive findings that the programs prevent the spread of HIV.

**June:** The first full-scale trial of a vaccine against HIV begins in the US by a company called *AIDSvax* using 5,000 volunteers.

**June 28-July 3:** The 12<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference, *Bridging the Gap*, is held in Geneva, there are reports on the existence of multi-drug resistant strains of HIV. The challenge of this conference is not only to discuss the advantages available for the treatment of HIV virus, but to conquer the overwhelming pessimism as well. The mood of the meeting is a sharp contrast to the euphoria at the previous AIDS conference, in Vancouver two years before.

**July:** Countering decades of promoting "breast is best" for infant nutrition, the United Nations issues recommendations, intended to discourage women infected with HIV from breast-feeding. The much-debated step aims at preventing transmission of HIV from mothers to babies in what United Nations officials say is "a runaway epidemic" in many developing countries.

**September:** In the US, the FDA approve Intelence (*e favirenz*), a drug in the NNRTI group.

**September:** A paper is published in *Nature Medicine* announcing the discovery of HIV-1 Group N (for new). It was first seen in 1995 in a 40-year-old Cameroonian woman with AIDS who did not test positive for HIV-1 Group M or Group O.

**October:** NSW adopts Australia's first guidelines for the prescription of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), opening the provision of PEP to people who have been exposed to HIV via sex or injecting drug use, as well as to those who have been occupationally exposed.

**November:** The review of the Third Australian National Strategy on HIV/AIDS begins.

**December 1:** World AIDS Day theme is "*Force for Change. World AIDS Campaign with Young People*".

**December 10:** International Human Rights Day, a Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) is launched to campaign for greater access to HIV treatment for all South Africans, by raising public awareness and understanding about issues surrounding the availability, affordability and use of HIV treatments. TAC campaigns against the view that HIV/AIDS is a death sentence.

**December 17:** In the US, the FDA approve *Ziagen (abacavir)* a NRTI to treat HIV-1 in adults and children accelerated approval rules.

**December:** In the US, Brian Stewart, a medical technician from Illinois, is sentenced to life in prison after deliberately injecting his son with HIV tainted blood in an effort to kill him and avoid paying child support. He was found guilty after all other probable sources for the boy's infection were ruled out.

**December:** The CDC report African Americans account for 49% of US AIDS deaths. Mortality for African Americans is almost ten times that of whites and three times that of Hispanics.

During this year in Australia, 755 people test positive for HIV, 329 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 164 die.

#### 1999 - Lowest annual number of Australian HIV diagnosis recorded

In Australia, issues of poverty, isolation, inadequate housing, depression and treatment side-effects begin to emerge as major issues for positive people.

In the UK, the number of HIV infections amongst men who have sex with men begins to rise after falling for many years.

**January 31:** Researchers report they have convincing proof that HIV has been transmitted from chimpanzees to people in Africa at least three separate times, with one of the transmissions starting the worldwide epidemic.

**February:** A group of researchers at the University of Alabama claim to have discovered that a particular type of chimpanzee, once common in West Central Africa, is the source of HIV. The researchers believe that HIV-1 was introduced into the human population when hunters became exposed to infected blood.

**February:** In the US, a doctor who injected his former lover with HIV infected blood is sentenced to 50 years in prison.

**April 15:** In the US, the FDA grants accelerated approval to *Amprenavir* a protease inhibitor that is indicated, in combination with other antiretroviral agents, for the treatment of HIV-1 infection.

**May:** According to WHO, HIV/AIDS becomes the fourth biggest killer worldwide, after heart disease, cerebro-vascular disease, and acute lower respiratory infections, and the number one killer in Africa, with an estimated 33 million people infected with HIV worldwide, and 14 million who have died of HIV/AIDS.

**July:** Initial findings are released from a joint Uganda-US study that identifies a new drug regimen, a single oral dose of the antiretroviral drug *Nevirapine*, as being both more affordable and effective in reducing mother to baby transmission of HIV. This research provides real hope that mother to child transmission of HIV could be effectively reduced in developing countries.

**July 28:** The Victorian Red Cross announces Australia's first case of HIV transmission via blood or blood products since the country's blood testing program began in May 1985. The blood had been donated by an asymptomatic woman who was not in a high-risk group who had been infected only days before making the blood donation, not enough time for antibodies to HIV to be detected. The Victorian Department of Human Services places the risk of this occurring at 1 in 1.2 million.

**August 3:** Researchers announce that a new strain of the HIV, named HIV-1 Group P, has been discovered in a woman from the African country of Cameroon, living in France. It differs from the three known subtypes of HIV-1 and appears to be more closely related to a form of SIV recently discovered in wild gorillas.

**August:** The UK Government announces that all pregnant women in Britain would be offered a HIV test in an attempt to reduce the number of newborns infected with HIV.

**August:** Australian Health Ministers agree to fund expensive Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT) in Blood Banks, which will reduce the window period for HIV from 22 to 11 days.

**August 25:** *The River*, by Journalist Edward Hooper is published and examines and advances on the theory that doctors un-intentionally originated the HIV/AIDS epidemic, during testing of an Oral Polio Vaccine in 1950s Africa.

**September:** South Africa wins the first round in its battle with the United States and multinational pharmaceutical companies to force a cut in drugs prices. The dispute concentrates on South African legislation, which enables local companies to manufacture HIV/AIDS drugs, which then can be sold at a fraction of the price of similar imported drugs. The US argues that the South African laws undermine pharmaceutical company's patent rights.

**October:** Recognising the importance of Hepatitis-C, Dr Michael Wooldridge, Minister for Health and Aged Care, announces the replacement of the National Council on AIDS and Related Diseases (ANCARD) with the Australian National Council on AIDS, Hepatitis-C and Related Diseases (ANCAHRD).

**November:** *Enfuvirtide*, a drug from a new class of drugs called a fusion inhibitor, begins clinical trials.

**November:** A research study argues that male circumcision could help to reduce HIV infection rates in Africa and Asia.

**November:** China broadcasts its first ever television advertisement for condoms in an effort to stop the spread of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. Shortly after the advertisement is seen by hundreds of millions of people, the State Administration of Industry and Commerce ban it.

**November 26:** At a conference on increasing global access to lifesaving drugs, the activist groups Health Action International, Doctors Without Borders (Medecins Sans Frontieres) and Ralph Nader's Consumer Project on Technology issue a statement calling for balancing the intellectual property rights of patent holders with the rights of citizens to access essential medicines, especially those who live in developing countries. The statement becomes known as the "Amsterdam Statement".

**December:** At a World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle, President Bill Clinton announces that the US will not level punitive trade sanctions against any sub-Saharan African country that wants to pursue parallel licenses or produce generic drugs. In May 2000, he signs an executive order "broadening the agreement to include all sub-Saharan African countries."

**December 1:** World AIDS Day theme aimed at children and young people "*Listen, Learn, Live!*"

During this year in Australia, 718 people test positive for HIV, 216 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 141 die.

### 2000 - First single tablet containing three antiviral drugs from a single drug class approved

There are 36 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, with Eastern Europe showing a massive increase in infection rates.

Brazil passes laws to allow the generic production of HIV antiretroviral drugs putting pressure on drug companies to lower prices.

A total of fourteen antiretroviral drugs are now approved by the FDA, although side effects and dosing regimens are proving difficult for many people to manage.

**January:** In the UK it is reported that for the first time, the number of newly diagnosed heterosexually acquired HIV infections, though not necessarily contracted in the UK, is higher than the number of newly diagnosed homosexually acquired infections.

**January 31:** *The New York Times* reports that a new study suggests that people with very low viral loads of HIV in their blood may be unlikely to spread the virus to others.

**February 2:** *The New York Times* reports that a study suggests that using a new statistical method and one of the world's most powerful computers, scientists at the Los Alamos National Laboratory said that they had traced the origin of the AIDS epidemic to around 1930, nearly 30 years before the earliest known infection in humans.

**February:** Preliminary studies presented at the 7th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections show that in some cases temporarily stopping HIV-drug therapy could still keep HIV under control and that the virus might not develop resistance to drug therapy. This later becomes known as structured treatment interruption or a "drug holiday".

**April:** The Clinton Administration formally declares HIV/AIDS a threat to US national security. The US believes that the global spread of AIDS is reaching catastrophic dimensions that could topple foreign Governments, spark ethnic wars and undo decades of work building free-market democracies abroad. It is the first time the National Security Council is involved in fighting an infectious disease.

**April:** South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki sends a letter explaining his views that HIV does not cause AIDS, to President Clinton, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and others. The letter is leaked to *The Washington Post*, infuriating and embarrassing Mbeki. The following month he holds an AIDS conference in South Africa and gives HIV Denialists equal time.

**May:** Five pharmaceutical companies offer to negotiate steep cuts in the price of AIDS drugs for Africa and other poor regions.

**May:** The South Australian Government announces that prisoners will be given condoms in an effort to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. "The prison system has a low rate of HIV/AIDS, and we want to keep it low," a spokeswoman for Correctional Services Minister Robert Brokenshire explained. Prisoners in NSW, WA, and the ACT already receive the prophylactics.

**June:** Australia's 4<sup>th</sup> National HIV/AIDS Strategy 1999-2000 to 2003-2004, "*Changes and Challenges*", is released.

**June:** A consortium of Australian researchers is awarded a \$27million contract to develop a vaccine for HIV/AIDS.

**July:** The UN Security Council passes Resolution 1308 stipulating that HIV poses a security threat to the nations of the world.

**July:** The United States offer loans to sub-Saharan African nations to finance the purchase of AIDS drugs and medical services, but the offer is rejected by many African nations.

**July 9-14:** The 13<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference, *Breaking the Silence*, is held in Durban, South Africa. This is the first time that such a conference is held in a developing country or in Africa. An 11-year old boy who has HIV gives a speech in the opening ceremony and calls for the Government to give *Zidovudine* to pregnant mothers who have HIV.

**September 15:** In the US, the FDA approve *Kaletra*, a protease inhibitor, (*lopinavir* boosted with *ritonavir*) for combination use with other antiretroviral agents for the treatment of HIV-1 infection in adults and paediatric patients age six months and older.

**September:** In Oxford UK, a new vaccine trial is launched. The research into an AIDS vaccine is criticised by the World Bank for focusing on a vaccine that could be marketed in western countries, despite the fact that more than 90% of HIV infections occur in the developing world.

**September:** The Wistar Institute reports that tests on samples of oral polio vaccine used in Africa and held in storage for over 40 years, show no trace of HIV or SIV and that studies of mitochondrial DNA from the samples also failed to provide any evidence to support the allegations that the polio vaccine had been prepared using chimpanzee tissue. Other CHAT samples found in institutions around the world also tested negative for chimp DNA, including the implicated batches 10a-11 & 13. Edward Hooper responds that even though the tests came back negative, not all batches were tested and the oral polio vaccine hypothesis does not contend that all vaccine batches were tainted.

**September 20:** The CDC report, in *MMWR* on a study that suggests that a widely used spermicide - Nonoxynol-9, contrary to previous thought, may actually increase the risk of HIV transmission.

**November 14:** In the US, the FDA approve *Trizivir*, a fixed-dose combination of *Abacavir*, *Zidovudine* and *Lamivudine* (3 NRTI drugs), for the treatment of HIV in adults and adolescents. *Trizivir* is not recommended for treatment in adults or adolescents who weigh less than 40 kilograms because it is a fixed-dose tablet.

**December 1:** World AIDS Day theme is "*AIDS: Men Make a Difference*".

During this year in Australia, 764 people test positive for HIV, 265 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 149 die. In Victoria, there is a 41% increase in new HIV diagnoses. The increases are in several groups, including gay and bisexual men, women and people who inject drugs. Researchers are unsure whether this indicates a change in behaviour in the community.

## 2001

Generic drug manufacturers offer to produce and sell discounted, generic forms of expensive patented HIV/AIDS drugs to a medical charity in Africa. The move forces several major pharmaceutical manufacturers to agree to offer further reduced drugs prices in developing countries.

During this year, it is estimated that the US Government spends US\$6.9 billion on HIV/AIDS treatments.

Two important documents on the global fight against HIV/AIDS are published. The *Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS*, resulting from the United Nations General Assembly Special Session, and the International Labour Organization's *Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS in the Workplace*.

By this year, HIV/AIDS has lowered the life expectancy in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, and Swaziland by 20 years, to less than 40 years of age.

Western Australia lowers age of consent for male homosexual sex from 21 to 16 years of age.

**January:** China admits that HIV/AIDS threatens its public health and economic security. China's most senior AIDS researcher states that China could soon have one of the highest numbers of HIV infections in the world. Infections are predicted to grow from about 600,000 to 6 million by 2005. It is believed that nearly 75% of China's HIV patients have contracted the disease through injecting drug use or transfusion with contaminated blood.

**February:** Brazil is threatened with legal action by the US Government, over the production of generic HIV drugs.

**February 7:** According to a study of nine cities in the United States and Canada, it is reported that 14 percent of newly infected people have strains of HIV that are resistant to at least one antiretroviral drug.

**February:** In Scotland, Stephen Kelly is found guilty at Glasgow High Court of "culpable and reckless conduct" for having unprotected sex knowing he had HIV, having infected his girlfriend in 1994. Kelly is the first person to be tried under Scottish law for culpable and reckless conduct for giving HIV to someone else. Some fear that the outcome of the trial might discourage HIV testing.

**March:** The South African Government releases its annual figures estimating that 4.7 million people are infected with HIV/AIDS and that 24.5% of pregnant women are HIV-positive in 2000.

**March:** Cipla, a Bombay-based pharmaceutical company, strikes a deal with Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) to provide a year's worth of antiretroviral drugs for US\$350 per patient, compared to the US\$10,000 to US\$15,000 per patient a year cost in the United States and Europe. Cipla stipulates that the drugs be provided free to patients.

**March:** A sudden explosion in HIV cases among injecting drug users in Dublin, Ireland is reported whereby diagnoses jumped fivefold between January 1999 and June 2000. Diagnoses fell to a low of 12 in 1998, but in the next 18 months 96 people tested positive. Doctors blame this on a sudden tightening of regulations around the supply of methadone, causing more people to inject street heroin.

**April:** 39 pharmaceutical companies drop legal action against the South African Government for wanting to lower drug prices.

**April:** In the UK it is reported that the year 2000 saw by the far the largest number of new HIV cases (3,453) yet recorded in the UK.

**April:** At the African Summit in Nigeria, UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan calls for spending on AIDS in less developed countries by developed countries be increased 10-fold.

**April:** US President, George W Bush, appoints an openly gay man, Scott Evertz, as Director of the Office of National AIDS policy, but does not find any extra money in his 2002 budget for AIDS prevention or treatment.

**May 1:** The NSW Medically Supervised Injecting Centre opens in Kings Cross and is the first legally sanctioned injecting centre for injecting drug users in the English-speaking world.

**May 5:** The *British Medical Journal* reports on a study that finds one in four people newly diagnosed with HIV in the UK are infected with a viral strain at least partly resistant to antiretroviral drugs. This raises concern about the level of HIV drug resistance.

**June:** The United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan opens the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS in New York, with a call to action and announces the creation of a Global Fund on AIDS and Health. This is the first ever UN meeting devoted to a public health issue.

**July:** The US complaint against Brazil for the production of generic drugs is dropped after Brazil promises to give the US advance warning before going ahead with their patent laws allowing drug production.

**September 21:** The FDA licenses the First Nucleic Acid Test (NAT) systems to screen donated blood plasma for HIV and Hepatitis C Virus (HCV).

**September 26:** The FDA approve the first HIV-1 Genotyping Kit and Open Gene DNA Sequencing System to be used to identify drug resistance in HIV patients.

**October 26:** In the US the FDA approve *Viread (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate)* as treatment for HIV-1 infection in combination with other antiretroviral medicines. *Tenofovir* is the first Nucleotide-analogue Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitor (NtRTI) approved for HIV-1 treatment under the new accelerated approval rules. Nucleotide-analogues are similar to Nucleoside-analogue RTIs, block HIV replication in a similar manner and are usually put in the same class of drugs as NRTIs.

**October:** The Global Fund on AIDS and Health is officially named The Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

**November 14:** The World Trade Organization (WTO) issues a ruling, which becomes known as the "Doha Declaration", giving poor countries the right to use compulsory licensing and other trade mechanisms to access generic drugs for domestic use in cases of public health emergencies.

**December 1:** World AIDS Day theme is "*I Care... Do You?*" It is announced that HIV/AIDS has become the most devastating disease humankind has ever faced.

**December 1:** Positive Women launches its Positive Steps campaign on the steps of Victorian parliament. This is a public event to raise awareness of the issues for women around contracting HIV, so that women and the community will take positive steps to ensure no more women become infected.

During this year in Australia, 775 people test positive for HIV, 213 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 85 die. In Victoria, numbers of new diagnoses of HIV continue to rise.

## 2002

The US announces a framework that would allow poor countries unable to produce pharmaceuticals to gain greater access to drugs needed to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other public health crises.

An Australian report suggests that Papua New Guinea (PNG) is on the brink of an HIV/AIDS epidemic and that the country could face losing 13-38% of its working population by 2020. It is estimated that PNG has between 10,000 to 15,000 people infected with HIV. In comparison, Australia, which has a population almost 5 times that of PNG, has only around 12,000 PLWHA. It is feared that HIV/AIDS could spread rapidly since 90% of infections in PNG are through heterosexual sex.

HIV is the leading cause of death worldwide among those aged 15-59.

UNAIDS reports that women now comprise about half of all adults living with HIV/AIDS worldwide.

**January:** The Ukraine becomes the first nation in Europe where 1% of its adult population is infected with HIV.

**February:** The US Secretary of State Colin Powell strongly advocates condom use to prevent the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases during an MTV broadcast, setting himself apart from President Bush's views on sex education.

**March:** A study is published that shows half of Americans still wrongly believe that they can contract HIV through everyday social contact.

**April:** AFAO demands the Commonwealth Bank explain its refusal to provide mortgage insurance cover to policy holders who die of HIV/AIDS, alleging that the bank had breached anti-discrimination laws.

**June:** A major Spanish study finds that over 19,000 instances of unprotected oral sex did not lead to a single case of HIV transmission among 135 HIV-negative heterosexuals in a sexual relationship with a person with HIV.

**July 2:** AFAO suggests that drug resistance, an increase in unprotected sex by gay men and a larger than ever viral pool is fuelling a second wave of the AIDS epidemic in Australia. AFAO is so concerned about what it describes as Australia's "faltering response" to the epidemic that it calls for the urgent fast tracking of a new HIV/AIDS strategy.

**July 7-14:** 14<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference, *Knowledge and Commitment for Action*, is held in Barcelona, Spain. It is reported that dozens of countries are in the grip of serious HIV/AIDS epidemics, and many more are on the brink. Enabling protection against HIV and providing adequate and affordable treatments represent two of the biggest challenges facing humankind.

**September:** Swiss researchers report the first fully documented case of a man with HIV who is infected with a second strain of HIV through unprotected sex more than two years after he was first infected.

**November:** A Western Australian man, Ronald Houghton, is sentenced to 7 years in gaol, after being found guilty of knowingly infecting a teenage girl with HIV after meeting her on the Internet and having unprotected sex with her. The court was told Houghton, who was diagnosed HIV-positive in early 1990, never discussed his HIV status with the young woman.

**November 7:** In the US, the FDA approve an easy-to-use 20-minute HIV test or rapid test. [Note: this test is not available in Australia].

**December 1:** UN Secretary General Kofi Annan uses World AIDS Day to speak out against HIV-related stigma and discrimination. World Aids Day theme is "*Stigma and Discrimination: Live and Let Live*".

During this year in Australia, 855 people test positive for HIV, 246 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 73 die. Also during this year, approximately 3.5 million new infections occurred in Sub-Sahara Africa and the epidemic claimed the lives of an estimated 2.4 million Africans. Worldwide, 10 million young people, aged 15-24, and almost 3 million children under 15 are living with HIV.

## 2003: Fourth class of treatment drugs

The fourth national HIV/AIDS strategy is reviewed with concerns that critical features of the success of the HIV/AIDS response in Australia, such as the partnership between the community, medicine, science and public health, are being diminished.

It is thought that just over half of all people with HIV in Australia are receiving antiretroviral treatment. Many people with HIV are now living longer and experiencing fewer HIV-related illnesses. Drug resistance and side effects continue to be and issue for some.

**January:** A leading UK soap opera, *East Enders*, writes out an HIV-positive character, Mark Fowler, after many years on the program.

**January 28:** In his State of the Union address, US President Bush announces the President's Emergency Plan For Aids Relief (PEPFAR), a US\$15-billion, 5-year plan to combat AIDS in African and Caribbean nations. He calls the scheme "a great mission of rescue".

**February:** A rare case of female-to-female sexual transmission of HIV is reported, with doctors suggesting the woman may have been infected through sharing sex toys, after drug resistance tests found striking similarities between the HIV strains of the woman and her HIV-positive female partner.

**March:** A HIV vaccine trial, AIDSVax, announces that their AIDS vaccine failed to reduce overall HIV infection rates among those who were vaccinated.

**March:** In the US, the FDA approve *Fuzeon (enfuvirtide)* sometimes called *T-20*. *Enfuvirtide* is an Entry Inhibitor and is a liquid which must be injected. *Enfuvirtide* represents the first new class of drug since 1996 and is good news for people who have become resistant to existing drugs. Entry/fusion inhibitors are considered by many to be the most exciting advance since protease inhibitors were introduced.

**April:** The US CDC announces a new initiative, *Advancing HIV Prevention*, to reduce the number of new HIV infections in the US. The initiative proposes changes such as introducing HIV testing as a routine part of medical care, use of rapid tests, offering women of unknown HIV status routine HIV testing as part of their antenatal care, an increased focus on people who are already infected with HIV and new models of sexual partner notification to increase the number of people who learn they are infected.

**May:** A team of Belgian researchers report on the probable origins of HIV-2. They conclude that the virus had probably been transferred from sooty mangabeys to humans in Guinea Bissau during the 1940s or 50s.

**May:** The PEPFAR program is approved by US Congress.

**May 27:** NSW lowers age of consent for male homosexual sex to 16, the same as for heterosexual sex.

**June:** An Australian woman who contracted HIV from her husband successfully sues two doctors for not warning her that her husband had HIV after they had gone for joint tests and is awarded over \$700,000 in damages. The couple were not told each other's results and they subsequently married and had unprotected sex. The NSW Supreme Court backed her argument that the doctors should not have assumed her partner would tell her about his positive test.

**June:** A paper published in *Science* magazine, suggests that HIV-1 appears to be a hybrid of 2 different strains of SIV, one found in red-capped mangabeys and another in greater spot-nosed monkeys. The paper suggests the two strains may have swapped genes inside chimpanzees, before being transferred to humans to become the deadly global epidemic it is today. The researchers note that chimpanzees prey on both these species and their territorial ranges overlap in West Central Africa.

**June 20:** In the US, the FDA approve *Reyataz (atazanavir)*, a protease inhibitor to be used in combination with other anti-retroviral agents for the treatment of patients with HIV infection. This is the first protease inhibitor that only needs to be taken once a day. *Atazanavir* also appears to have less impact on lipid parameters such as triglycerides and cholesterol suggesting less risk of heart disease as a side-effect.

**July 2:** In the US, the FDA approve *Emtriva (emtricitabine or FTC)*, a once-a-day NRTI for use in combination with other anti-retroviral agents for the treatment of patients with HIV infection.

**September:** It is reported that HIV may have been passed between two Australian sisters who shared a razor to shave their legs. In this case, an 18-year-old girl caught the disease on the first occasion she had sex. Her 16-year-old sister later tested positive for the virus when she donated blood. Both teenagers had a particular subtype of the virus, which is very rare in Australia, making it highly likely that one had infected the other. The older girl was unaware of her HIV infection until doctors began to investigate how her younger sister, who had never had intercourse, had contracted HIV.

**September:** In a Canadian case, *R. v. Williams*, the court has ruled a person can be convicted of 'attempted aggravated assault' and 'common nuisance' if they were aware of a risk they may be HIV-positive before an HIV test is conducted or considered.

**October:** In the UK, a man, Mohammed Dica, is jailed for 8 years for inflicting biological grievous bodily harm by infecting two lovers with HIV. He is the first person in 137 years to be convicted in England and Wales for sexually transmitting a disease.

**October 20:** In the US, the FDA approve *Telzir (fosamprenavir calcium)*, a protease inhibitor to be used in combination with other anti-retroviral agents for the treatment of patients with HIV infection.

**October 23:** The Australian Health Department releases a report "*Returns on Investment in Needles and Syringe Programs in Australia*" showing there has been at least 25,000 cases of HIV avoided, leading to a lifetime saving of over \$7 million from the program.

**November:** The Fertility Society of Australia, at their Annual Scientific Meeting held in Perth, calls for the nation needs to rethink its opposition to male circumcision amid growing evidence the practice offers significant health benefits for men and women. Professor Roger Short of Melbourne University said Australia has an "unduly negative" attitude toward male circumcision, which recent studies showed may significantly reduce a man's risk of becoming HIV-positive and lowers the risk of cervical cancer in their female partners.

**December 1:** On World AIDS Day, Wen Jiabao becomes the first Chinese premier to shake the hand of an AIDS patient. Mr Wen's handshake broadcast in close-up is one a series of government actions that demonstrate a new determination to fight AIDS.

**December 1:** WHO and UNAIDS release a detailed plan aimed at bringing treatments to 3 million people by the end of 2005, called the "3 by 5" Initiative.

During this year in Australia, 875 people test positive for HIV, 245 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 55 die. After many years of reductions in annual HIV notifications, all Australian states have experienced an increase in new HIV diagnoses. In NSW this year, the increase is 18%. This is considered to be associated with a corresponding increase in STIs, such as syphilis and gonorrhoea.

Also this year, worldwide three million die from HIV/AIDS and five million people are newly infected with HIV, the greatest number in one year since the epidemic began. According to the United Nations Population Fund, around 6,000 people between the ages of 15 and 24 are infected with the virus every day. This means a young person is infected with HIV every 14 seconds.

2004

New treatment guidelines from WHO and US Department of Health and Human Services recommend that anti-retroviral treatment be delayed for a person with no symptoms who has a CD4 cell count above 350 and viral load under 100,000.

A vaccine for HIV is still years away, warns the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative. Less than 3% of all money devoted to HIV/AIDS goes towards developing a vaccine for the disease.

Trials begin on HIV microbicide creams and gels, which may provide a powerful weapon against the spread of HIV. Early studies show some may prevent infection in up to 75% of cases.

A drug that stops HIV from stitching itself into human chromosomes is found to successfully fight HIV in an animal study. In the face of emerging drug-resistant HIV strains, the find could offer a new approach.

In the US, an estimated 300,000 patients are co-infected with Hepatitis-C and HIV and liver disease has become an important cause of mortality in HIV infected patients.

In NSW, following the 18% rise in new HIV infections in gay men living in inner city Sydney in 2003, a targeted campaign is run by a number of community based HIV/AIDS organisations and inner city Area Health Services.

In the UK, it is announced that between 1997 and 2003 there had been a 351% increase in the diagnosis of heterosexually acquired HIV infections in the UK, with 70% of being accounted for by individuals of African origin, with one study concluding that the increasing population of African people living with HIV was the most complex challenge posed by HIV and AIDS in the UK.

**January 12:** In the UK, Kouassi Adaye is convicted of reckless endangerment after infecting a woman with HIV. He had not tested HIV-positive, but it was considered he could reasonably believe that he may have been HIV-Positive.

**February 2:** UNAIDS launches The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS to raise the visibility of the epidemic's impact on women and girls around the world.

**March:** Stephen Lewis, the UN special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa warns that WHO's "3 by 5" initiative is being compromised because of lack of financial support from the world's richest countries.

**March:** In the US, the FDA approve the first oral fluid rapid HIV test. [Note, this test is not approved for use or available in Australia]

**May:** In the UK, Mohammed Dica, who was jailed for 8 years in October 2003 for inflicting biological grievous bodily harm by infecting two lovers with HIV, wins the right to a retrial. The Court of Appeal ruled that the judge at Dica's first trial should not have withdrawn from the jury the issue of whether the women consented to intercourse, knowing Dica had HIV. The judge at the first trial had held that consent is irrelevant and provided no defence because, under legal precedent, the women had "no legal capacity to consent to such serious harm".

**June:** WHO announced that, by the end of June, 440,000 people in developing and transitional countries are receiving antiretroviral treatment.

**June:** AFAO release the first Australian issues paper on HIV Pre-Exposure chemo-Prophylaxis (PrEP), where the possibility of people who are HIV-negative, possibly being able to take HIV Anti-retroviral drugs in order to have sex without condoms is discussed.

**June:** A large study of Australian high-school students finds that homosexual and bisexual boys are four times more likely than their peers to have injected drugs in the past year, with lesbian and bisexual girls three times more likely to have injected drugs in the past year.

**June:** In France, Christophe Morat, is sentenced to six years in a French prison after he was found guilty of failing to disclose his status to two women, Isabelle and Aurore, both of whom subsequently became HIV+.

**July 11-16:** 15<sup>th</sup> International Conference on AIDS, *Access For All*, is held in Bangkok, Thailand.

**August 2:** In the US, the FDA approve two combination tablets on the same day, *Kivexa [Epizcomin the US] (abacavir + lamivudine)* and *Truvada (tenofovir + emtricitabine)* both are combinations of 2 NRTI drugs.

**June:** President Bush's US\$15 billion PEPFAR initiative to combat the global AIDS pandemic begins full implementation, having received its first funding in January. PEPFAR is to concentrate on fifteen focus countries, all of them in Africa except Guyana, Haiti and Vietnam. The initiative sets a goal of providing AIDS treatment to 200,000 people living in the focus countries by June 2005.

**July 16:** The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announces that it will donate US\$50 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, bringing its total fund contributions so far to US\$150 million.

**November 19:** The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria announces that it will delay launching its fifth round of grants for five months because of a funding shortfall following US Government contribution cuts to the fund.

**November:** A one-legged, 56-year-old German resident in Thailand, Hans-Otto Schiemann, allegedly tried to infect nearly 100 Thai women (including his wife) during the 10 years he lived in the country. As Thailand deliberately has no laws that outlaw unprotected sex or its consequences, he is eventually sentenced to two months in jail for overstaying his visa, and is deported back to Germany. He is deported for a second time in November 2005 after he was found to have re-entered the country.

**December:** In the US, an African-American, Anthony Whitfield, is sentenced to an unprecedented 178 years in prison by a court in the state of Washington after exposing 17 women to HIV and infecting his wife and four others.

**December 1:** World AIDS Day theme is *Women, Girls, HIV and AIDS*.

**December:** A survey of overseas backpackers in Sydney and Cairns reveals half of those having sex, failed to use a condom the last time they had sex, with a quarter never using condoms. The survey also showed that 1 per cent of backpackers are HIV-positive.

During this year in Australia, 913 people test positive for HIV, 202 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 58 die. Queensland experiences a 20% increase in HIV notifications. NSW experiences a reduction in infections of 14%, which is attributed to a targeted campaign highlighting the previous year's 18% rise in new HIV infections in gay men living in inner city Sydney.

2005 – First time that an approved treatment drug is discontinued due to obsolescence

It becomes clear that the “3 by 5” Initiative announced by WHO, to bring treatments to 3 million people by the end of 2005, will not be achieved.

**January:** Nelson Mandela announces that his eldest son, aged 54, has died of AIDS, in the hope that such openness will help fight stigma.

**January 21:** The CDC in the US recommends anti-retroviral post-exposure prophylaxis for people exposed to HIV from rapes, accidents or occasional unsafe sex or drug use. This treatment should start no more than 72 hours after a person has been exposed to the virus, and the drugs should be used by patients for 28 days. This emergency drug treatment had been recommended since 1996 for health-care workers accidentally stuck with a needle, splashed in the eye with blood, or exposed in some other way on the job.

**January:** In the UK, Labour MP and former Culture Secretary Chris Smith announces that he has been HIV-positive for seventeen years. He had been an MP since 1983 and come out as gay in 1984, but before this point he had only told his closest friends that he had HIV. He stated that his revelation was intended to challenge the prejudice surrounding HIV.

**February:** In the US, there are reports of a highly treatment resistant strain of HIV, seemingly linked to rapid progression to AIDS, having been identified in one man in New York City.

**March 23:** In the UK at the third hearing of his case, the Court found that Mohammed Dica had actively persuaded one of his partners not to use condoms, even though he knew he was HIV-positive. He is found guilty of reckless HIV transmission and is sentenced to four and a half years in jail.

**May 4:** Brazil turns down US\$40 million offered by PEPFAR because it refuses to agree to a declaration condemning prostitution. The director of Brazil’s HIV/AIDS program said the Government had taken the decision “in order to preserve its autonomy on issues related to national policies on HIV/AIDS as well as ethical and human rights principles”.

**May:** Roche announces that it will cease manufacturing *Hivid* (zalcitabine or ddC) by the end of 2006, as its use has fallen dramatically as newer and better drugs have become available and it is deemed obsolete.

**May:** The report *Australia’s Response to HIV/AIDS 1982-2005*, by William Bowtell of the Lowy Institute for International Policy is published. It outlines the policies and principles that Australia followed in response to the threat posed by HIV/AIDS that kept Australia’s HIV/AIDS infection rates so low for so long.

**June:** The acting director of the US CDC announces that between 1.039 million and 1.185 million Americans are living with HIV at the end of 2003, of which 47% are African Americans. It is also estimated that one in four people with HIV in the US do not know they are infected.

**June:** The Commonwealth Government releases four important strategy documents covering 2005-2008, being, *The fifth Australian National HIV/AIDS Strategy: “Revitalising Australia’s Response”*, the *National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy*, the second *National Hepatitis-C Strategy*, and the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Strategy*.

**June:** A study presented at the US National HIV Conference shows that new infections among African Americans are increasing, while the total number of new cases in the US is remaining stable at around 40,000 per year.

**June 22:** In the US, the FDA approve *Aptivus* (*tipranavir*), a protease inhibitor that seems to work against HIV that is resistant to other protease inhibitors.

**July 5:** The *Sydney Morning Herald*, in its opinion section, argues that it is more urgent for the world to fight HIV, malnutrition and malaria than to tackle climate change.

**July 18:** A young Welsh woman, aged 20, is sentenced to two years’ youth custody after pleading guilty to “recklessly inflicting grievous bodily harm” by transmitting HIV to her former boyfriend, also 20. It is the first time that a conviction for reckless HIV transmission has been secured in Wales, and the woman, who was aged 18 when the HIV transmission is alleged to have occurred, is the first female in the United Kingdom to be successfully prosecuted for HIV transmission.

**August:** An Australian trial of a treatment, *Sculptra* (polylactic acid or *New Fill*), for facial wasting is announced.

**August:** A gay man, Michael Cain, launches a legal case against the Australian Red Cross Blood Service calling on them to change their policy of banning active homosexual men from donating blood, after being told he was barred from donating blood because he has had sex with another man in the past 12 months.

**September:** A laboratory study comparing samples of HIV-1 from 1986-89 to samples from 2002-03 finds that HIV might be weakening. The newer samples do not reproduce as well and appear more susceptible to drugs.

**September:** At the World Summit in New York, all UN Member States pledge to develop and implement a package for HIV prevention, treatment and care with the aim of coming as close as possible to the goal of universal access to treatment by 2010 for all those who need it.

**September 19:** The antiretroviral drug *AZT/zidovudine* reaches the end of its patent period in the US. This means that any pharmaceutical company can now produce the drug legally and cheaply for the US market without having to pay royalties to the patent owner, GlaxoSmithKline. The FDA immediately approve four generic forms of *Zidovudine* for sale within America.

**September 30:** The Australian Federal Court rules that the Immigration Department can refuse visas to people infected with HIV, regardless of their circumstances.

**October:** Sharlene, the sex worker with HIV discussed in this document in 1989, dies.

**October:** A New Zealand court rules that a man who did not tell his sex partner that he was HIV-positive should not be prosecuted, because he had used a condom. Although New Zealand law says people with HIV should disclose their condition, Justin Dalley is acquitted of two charges of criminal nuisance. The New Zealand Aids Foundation welcomes the ruling, saying it highlighted that condoms keep people safe from HIV.

**November:** A British man, Andrew Stimpson, causes an international media frenzy when two UK newspapers suggest he has “cured himself” of HIV infection, however scientists are doubtful of this claim. Further research into this case must occur before a conclusive answer can be found.

**November:** A gay man and a former medical student in Atlanta US, Wayne Carriker, is convicted and sentenced to two years imprisonment for having unprotected sex with his partner and not revealing his HIV status. A few weeks later, Carriker pleaded guilty to two additional charges of reckless conduct receiving an additional two-year sentence and eight years' probation.

**November:** According to a United Nations report, unprotected sex among heterosexual couples is contributing to increasing numbers of new HIV cases in Australia, with the proportion of new cases among women increasing dramatically. In NSW, the number of new HIV diagnoses among women almost doubled between 2003 and 2004 and the proportion of infections through heterosexual intercourse have risen from 7 per cent of new diagnoses before 1996 to more than 23 per cent in 2004.

**November 18:** The Bush Administration breaks a promise by restricting US global AIDS funds from funding foreign non-government organisations that provide safe abortion services, counselling, referral, or information on safe abortion, advocate for changes in abortion law in their own country, conducts research on the effects of unsafe abortion, or otherwise work on safe abortion issues.

**November 21:** UNAIDS/WHO, on the release of their annual AIDS Epidemic Update for 2005, announce that by year's end, there will be an estimated 40.3 million people living with HIV infection with over 3.1 million people having died from AIDS during this year and 21 million who have died since 1981. HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death among those aged 15 to 49 worldwide.

**December 1:** 18<sup>th</sup> Annual World Aids Day. World theme is *Stop AIDS, Keep the Promise*. Australian theme is *HIV/AIDS: Let's Talk About it*.

**December 1:** A NSW man with HIV, Stanislaus Kanengele-Yondjo, who knowingly infected two women with HIV via unprotected sex, is sentenced to 12 years prison, becoming the first person in NSW to be sentenced for knowingly passing on the virus. His doctor had specifically told the man he must practise safe sex.

**December 8:** A Queensland man with HIV, Mark Kenneth Reid, is sentenced to 10 years prison for infecting another man with the virus in a ruling that is the first of its kind in the state of Queensland. Reid had pleaded not guilty, saying his partner had been aware of his HIV status and had chosen to have unprotected sex. His former partner had argued, however, that Reid had repeatedly told him he had tested HIV-negative.

**December 8:** A discussion paper is released in Victoria calling for numerous changes to the state *Public Health Act*, including increased powers when contract tracing, removal of mandatory pre- and post-test counselling, the power to force people to be tested for HIV without consent and the end to coded HIV notifications. Only 2 weeks are given for public comment.

During this year in Australia, 965 people test positive for HIV, 234 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 37 die. Victoria reports it has experienced a 23% increase in HIV notifications during 2005. HIV rates plateau in NSW, but at a much higher level than in 2001. New Zealand reports a 17% increase in HIV notifications during 2005.

#### 2006 – First single tablet containing 3 drugs from 2 drug classes approved (ie a complete treatment regimen)

**January:** A 33yo man with HIV, Andre Chad Parenzee, becomes the first South Australian to be convicted of deliberately infecting another person with a fatal disease after having unprotected sex with three women, one of whom was infected. He appeals and argues (unsuccessfully) that his conviction should be quashed because there is no scientific proof that HIV actually exists. The lawyers tried to use testimony from two Western Australian based scientists, who argued that the virus has never been isolated, current testing regimes are inconclusive and that there is no proof HIV is transmitted sexually.

**January:** Scientists find that people with two copies of the CCR5-Delta32 variant gene, are more resistant to HIV and smallpox, but are more susceptible to West Nile Virus.

**January 20:** A major international trial, *Strategies for Management of Anti-Retroviral Therapy (SMART)*, looking into the effects of treatment breaks, is halted after researchers found that patients on continuous anti-viral medication had half the risk of developing AIDS or dying than those on episodic treatment. More than 5,000 HIV-positive volunteers were involved in the trial. Follow-up visits will continue for all existing participants in the trial while the study team considers plans for longer follow-up.

**January 30:** The Australian National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, reports that NSW rural intravenous drug users (IDU) typically wait twice as long between HIV tests as city based IDU and are much more likely to rely on other users for providing their injecting equipment.

**February:** In Swaziland, a country that has the world's lowest circumcision rate and one of the highest HIV infection rates, response has been quick to new studies showing circumcised males are 60-75 percent less likely to acquire HIV sexually. Clinics are reportedly being swamped with requests for circumcision. Mothers are bringing their sons in for the procedure, older men - their brothers. Children are begging to be circumcised just like many of their friends at school. Reportedly, circumcision appointments are filled until August.

**February 7:** A group of researchers from the University of Nottingham (UK) announce that they believe they have pinpointed the origin of HIV, with the virus appearing to have originated in a community of chimpanzees that lived in south-eastern Cameroon, near the border of present day Gabon and the Congo Republic. The researchers spent 15 years digging in mounds of old chimpanzee faeces and genetically comparing the Simian Immunodeficiency Viruses found, to the earliest known HIV sample from a man who died in the Congo in 1959.

**March:** American Red Cross calls for the removal of the lifetime ban on gay men donating blood and suggest replacing it with a ban of 12 months since their last sexual contact, as in Australia.

**March 7:** In Queensland, a man with HIV is charged with attempting to transmit a serious disease to a woman and with assaulting her causing bodily harm, after he repeatedly bit the woman who challenged him when she saw him punching a cab driver.

**March 10:** It is reported that HIV treatment for new refugees to Australia, some of who were not screened by the Immigration Department and only discovered they had the illness after entering Australia, is costing NSW \$2 million annually.

**March 14:** Delivering her annual Commonwealth Day message from Australia, the Queen highlights that of the 40 million people infected with HIV/AIDS worldwide, half live in Commonwealth countries.



- March:** The US CDC announce that a combination drug, *Truvada*, is being studied as a possible preventive, via PrEP, for healthy people at high risk of HIV infection has proven so effective in animal studies that expanded ongoing human safety and efficacy tests will take place. However Gilead, the manufacturer of *Truvada*, has also made announcements suggesting caution, to try to reduce excitement about the development, in part out of fear that *Truvada* will be seen as a “bio-medical condom.”
- April:** In Switzerland, a woman with HIV receives a suspended prison sentence after having consensual unprotected sex, even though none of her partners became infected with HIV and she informed the men of her HIV infection before having sex with them. The woman is also ordered to notify Swiss authorities of the names of all her future sexual partners, even if she uses condoms with them.
- April 27:** Prince Harry vows to continue the work of his mother, Diana, Princess of Wales, in the fight against HIV/AIDS. He co-founds a charity “Sentebale”, which means ‘forget me not’, in the African Kingdom of Lesotho to support children orphaned by AIDS, in memory of his mother, along with Prince Seeiso of Lesotho whose mother Queen Mamohato died in 2003 and had supported work with orphans.
- May:** A UK study of heterosexuals with HIV shows that 73% used a condom the last time they had vaginal sex. The main reasons given for not using condoms were a dislike by either the study participant or their partner.
- May 15:** A Sydney study, published in *AIDS*, shows that HIV-negative gay men are increasingly selecting other HIV-negative men for unprotected casual anal sex. The practice of deliberately selecting partners of the same HIV status is called “sero-sorting”. Investigators caution that sero-sorting by men who assume that they are HIV-negative may be highly problematic.
- May:** A Melbourne man, Michael Neal, is arrested and charged with 17 offences (which eventually expands to 44 charges) including; intentionally infecting a man with HIV, attempting to transmit the virus to (up to 15) others (and a rape charge). Although the Victorian Health Department had received complaints suggesting the man was deliberately spreading HIV, and had taken out 4 public health orders requiring him to only have safe sex, they failed to alert police of these allegations. Some sections of the community call for mandatory reporting of risky sex, a call that HIV/AIDS organisations reject.
- June 1:** A United Nations Report says that Australia’s AIDS epidemic is not easing, with the number of annual HIV diagnoses reverting to the alarming levels of the early 1990s. Unprotected homosexual sex was held as largely responsible for the rise in new infections.
- June:** Researchers announce that increasingly effective HIV therapy, including a decade of highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART), has provided 3 million years of extended life to Americans with AIDS since 1989.
- June 21:** In the UK, Sarah Jane Porter becomes the first woman convicted in an English court of deliberately infecting a man with HIV, and is jailed for 32 months.
- June:** All sexual health clinics in the UK receive a firm recommendation to introduce ‘opt-out’ testing for HIV for all patients, regardless of risk factors for infection, in guidelines published by the British Association of Sexual Health and HIV.
- June 23:** In the US, the FDA approve the protease inhibitor *Prezista* (*darunavir* formerly called TMC-114) for use by people who have drug-resistant human immunodeficiency virus. This approval makes a total of 22 antiretroviral agents in four classes that are FDA approved.
- July 3:** The California Supreme Court rules that people who don’t tell their sexual partners about their sexual pasts can be forced to pay damages for negligently and unintentionally transmitting HIV or other sexually transmitted infections, extending liability to include people who represent themselves as “risk free”, but should have reason to know they may be living with an infection.
- July 12:** In the US, the FDA approve *Atripla*, the first pill that combines 3 drugs from 2 classes (NRTI+NNRTI) and is therefore a complete treatment in a single pill. Atripla contains Bristol-Myers Squibb’s drug *efavirenz* with Gilead Sciences’ *Truvada*, a drug combining *tenofovir* and *emtricitabine*, allowing 1 pill a day dosing.
- July 13:** An Australian study is published in *AIDS* describing how male HIV infection may occur through infection of cells on the inner surface of the foreskin and the fraenum of uncircumcised men, areas which contain HIV-susceptible Langerhans’ cells close to the surface of the skin, and are protected with only a thin layer of keratin. Langerhans’ cells are responsible for picking up disease-causing organisms and taking them to the lymph nodes to help activate an immune response and are thought to be a major route to HIV infection.
- July 29:** The *Journal of Virology* publishes an article that demonstrates that HIV is able to replicate in the lining of the gut and causes much of its damage to the immune system there. The study may explain why HAART sometimes fails to work completely.
- August 3:** In the UK, a 47 year-old man, Mark James, is sentenced to 4 years and 3 months in jail, becoming the first gay man to be successfully prosecuted and sentenced for reckless transmission of HIV to another man (his 37 year-old partner) in England and Wales. He pleads guilty after being faced with “scientific proof” from the prosecution that his strain of virus was the same as that his partner had. He is the seventh successful conviction for ‘recklessly inflicting grievous bodily harm by transmitting HIV’ in England/Wales. His sentence is similar to the three to four years per offence handed down to other heterosexual men and women for the reckless transmission of HIV.
- August 4:** Researchers at the University of Buffalo report that methamphetamine (meth) can promote the spread of HIV-1 in users, as meth increases production of a docking protein that enables the spread of the HIV-1 virus in infected users. The finding suggests that that using meth can be doubly dangerous as using meth may reduce inhibitions, thus increasing the likelihood of risky sexual behaviour and the potential to introduce the virus into the body and at the same time allow more viruses to infect cells.
- August:** 16th International Conference on AIDS, *Time To Deliver*, is held in Toronto, Canada.
- August:** A major study into “Elite Controllers” is launched on the last day of the Toronto conference. The hope is that by studying the genes of people previously called “long-term non-progressors”, who have had HIV for long periods of time with high CD4 count, low viral load and no disease progression, it may lead to new vaccine ideas or a gene based therapy for PLWHA.
- September:** Leading health experts call for “dramatic improvements in tuberculosis control” to prevent a potentially untreatable form of TB. The call comes at a two-day meeting in Johannesburg over concern about the spread of a deadly new form of TB known as XDR-TB. Health officials say it could result in a setback in treatment programs for HIV/AIDS, since the two diseases are so closely linked.

**September 21:** The US CDC publish new testing guidelines urging all adults and adolescents aged 13 to 64 to undergo HIV antibody testing as a routine medical screening test and recommending that everyone should get tested at least once, and that people at high risk of HIV infection should take an HIV test at least once every year.

**September:** A systematic review in the journal *Sexually Transmitted Infections* suggests that smoking appears to be associated with an increased risk of acquiring HIV infection, but does not appear to be related to progression to AIDS. The authors point out several important limitations to their headline conclusions, including the fact that all of the studies examining the effects of smoking on HIV disease progression took place in the developed world prior to the widespread availability of potent antiretroviral therapy.

**October:** A study published in *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research* shows that heavy drinking can accelerate time to AIDS among rhesus macaques infected with simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV). The monkeys were exposed to alcohol for four days a week at levels designed to simulate binge drinking, and compared with a control group.

**October:** A policy drafted by the Commonwealth Government says all women should be offered HIV testing, and pregnant women should be tested routinely. Currently, testing is offered to women only if they are deemed to be at risk of infection.

**October 20:** In the US, the FDA approve a third generation Rapid HIV-1 Antibody Test (Reveal G3). Reveal G3, is able to deliver test results in less than three minutes.

**November 7:** A study is published on genetically engineered HIV, where half of the virus DNA is removed and is then introduced into a patient, has suppressed the virus and renewed the immune systems in some of the patients. The study involved just five people, and will require years more study, but the surprising results offer new hope both for the field of gene therapy and for treating HIV infection.

**November 8:** It is reported that HIV-1 Group O may be closely related to a strain of SIV that has been found in gorillas. Variant O is only found in Cameroon and surrounding countries and is rare, representing only about one percent of HIV/AIDS cases in the area.

**November:** In NSW, Acon run a targeted campaign alerting gay men to the symptoms of HIV sero-conversion in an effort to reduce the numbers of men with undiagnosed recent HIV infection.

**November 16:** The NSW Court of Criminal Appeal rejects the appeal for a reduction in sentence from Stanislas Kanengele-Yondjo, who was convicted in December 2005 for infecting two of his female lovers and sentenced to 12 years imprisonment.

**November 30:** Dr Roger Garsia, Chairperson of the New South Wales Ministerial Advisory Committee on HIV and Sexually Transmissible Infections says that Australians are becoming complacent about HIV. Australia logged 950 new cases in 2005, up slightly from 2004, for a per capita prevalence rate comparable to that of the United Kingdom and Canada.

**December 1:** 18th Annual World AIDS Day. The Australian theme is "HIV/AIDS: Let's talk about it: many faces, different stories". The international theme is "Stop AIDS: keep the promise".

**December 1:** US President Bush announces that he will issue an executive order to allow people with HIV to enter the United States on short-term tourist or business visas without having to seek special permission, reversing a long-standing rule barring people with HIV from entering the United States without a special waiver. This has been long criticised by human rights groups.

**December:** An article in *Sexually Transmitted Infections*, suggests that sero-sorting can influence the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, at least where men with HIV are concerned. The report suggests physicians should be ready to discuss the implications of HIV-positive patients having unprotected sex with other people who have HIV.

**December 14:** Two major studies on male circumcision in Africa report that it reduces the risk of HIV infection for men having vaginal intercourse by half. It is thought that this is may prompt African nations hard hit by AIDS to promote circumcision to reduce infection rates.

During this year in Australia, 1,009 people test positive for HIV, 222 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 52 die following AIDS.

### 2007: Fifth class of treatment drugs

**January 13:** An article in the *British Medical Journal* calls for HIV treatment guidelines be revised to recommend the initiation of antiretroviral therapy when an individual's CD4 cell count falls to 350 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>, following studies showing better long term outcomes for those treated so.

**January 16:** The NSW Government announces that the number of HIV infections in the state seems to have stabilised, even as cases continue to climb nationally.

**January:** Researchers at Duke University Medical Center announce that a new test can detect whether patients are infected with even small amounts of drug-resistant forms of HIV. While other tests only pick up drug-resistant strains when they represent a significant portion of the virus in a person's bloodstream, the test developed at Duke may enable doctors to more accurately predict which drugs will work for patients and which drugs will ultimately fail. So far, the test has been used for research purposes only.

**January 22:** The AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), a major US non profit organisation, files a lawsuit that accuses drug giant Pfizer of illegally promoting recreational use of Viagra. AHF want Pfizer to be barred from marketing Viagra as a lifestyle or sexual enhancement drug and believe that Pfizer's advertising has led to increased risky behaviour by men and increases in transmission of HIV and other STIs.

**January:** A University of Miami study of 262 HIV patients found those who took a daily capsule containing 200 micrograms of selenium, a semi-metallic element found in some foods and soils, had lower viral load and higher CD4 counts compared to those taking a placebo.

**January 30:** Following an advisory committee's urging, the Australian Health minister, Tony Abbott, agrees to seek budget approval to spend \$10-million on a four-year national sexual health campaign. This follows an increase of HIV infections by 41% over the period 2000-2005.

**January 31:** Researchers halt two studies of an anti-AIDS vaginal gel in Africa and India after early results suggested it might raise the risk of HIV infection instead of lowering it.

**February 4:** A study published in the *American Journal of Pathology* suggests HIV can evade antiretroviral drugs by hiding in the testicles. Evidence shows even the best anti-retroviral drugs find it difficult to penetrate into the testes, where it is also possible for HIV to replicate. This may explain why HIV can still be found in the semen of men on ART treatment that successfully clear their blood of it.

**February 7:** ACT Health says there is a small chance that up to 97 babies who had biopsies of the colon performed between February 1987 and mid-October 1988 may have been infected with Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C or HIV, after it is discovered that sterilisation procedures were inadequate. All the children are being sought to be offered testing.

**February 8:** It is announced that a large-scale clinical trial of a candidate HIV vaccine, which previously showed promise in smaller studies in Australia and elsewhere, is set to begin in South Africa. Three thousand sexually active HIV-negative men and women will be immunised in the four-year study.

**March 2:** Viral genetic research presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, indicates that HIV group M subtype B, the strain most prevalent in Haiti, North America and Europe was transferred to Haiti from the Congo in approximately 1966 and then had restricted spread around Haiti before a single individual took it to the US between 1969 and 1972, providing the foundation for the world-wide epidemic of subtype B. The analysis also concurred that HIV-1 Group M, from which subtype B derives, originated around 1930.

**March 15:** A former head of HIV Programs at the CDC and resident scholar at Oxford University, Dr Harold Jaffe, says "The AIDS epidemic in the United States is appreciably worse than the epidemic in any western European country. Deaths due to AIDS are twice as high as the highest western European country, which is Portugal, and 10 times higher than the United Kingdom."

**March 28:** The WHO and UNAIDS recommend that circumcision should be added to current interventions to reduce the spread of HIV.

**April 2:** Victoria's Health Minister, Bronwyn Pike, orders officials at the Department of Human Services to refer future allegations of unsafe sex practices by people with HIV to police in the wake of the Michael Neal scandal. Officers of the Department of Human Services are accused of failing to move quickly enough to stop Mr Neal from allegedly spreading the virus intentionally.

**April 5:** New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene announces that it is planning a campaign to encourage men at high risk of HIV/AIDS to get circumcised in light of the WHO's endorsement of the procedure as an effective way to prevent the disease.

**April 5:** A South Australian man with HIV, Stuart McDonald, is detained in Glenside Psychiatric Hospital under the Public and Environmental Health Act on suspicion of deliberately trying to infect others. Up to 12 men with links to McDonald may have tested HIV-positive. McDonald came to the attention of the Health Department in early 2005 after allegations he had knowingly infected someone. He had been under close supervision for failing to change his behaviour. McDonald, a chef, moved back to SA from NSW early in 2005.

**April 11:** Following recent cases in Victoria and South Australia, where persons with HIV have placed others at deliberate risk, Australian Health Minister, Tony Abbott, calls for the States to adopt national HIV guidelines, which will focus on managing "risky" HIV-positive patients.

**April 13:** Prime Minister, John Howard, said that he would seek to change the law so as to refuse migrants and refugees who have HIV entry into Australia. This follows an analysis that immigrants were largely responsible for the increase in HIV notifications in Victoria. Individuals and HIV/AIDS community organisations, both in Australia and overseas, are outraged at the comments.

**April 13:** CDC recommends a change in the standard treatment for gonorrhoea, due to increasing drug resistance.

**April 23:** A Brisbane man with HIV, Jamie Michael Richards, pleads not guilty in the Brisbane District Court to intending to transmit a serious disease and unlawfully transmitting a serious disease due to sex with a 20-year-old man, whom he first met in 2003.

**April 24:** The AMA president, Dr Chris Cain, says the image of HIV detainee Stuart McDonald should be released in the interests of the public. The call comes as the South Australian Liberal Opposition calls for the wives, girlfriends and partners involved in the HIV scandal to be financially compensated if they have contracted the virus.

**April 24:** A University of Sydney survey finds that many Australian men who are involved in heterosexual relationships and having sex with other men say they would commit suicide before admitting their secret. Researcher Jeff Hudson suggested that instead of hurting their wives, damaging their marriage or ending up with nothing, they would rather kill themselves and possibly put their partners at risk of HIV/STIs.

**April 28:** *The Age* reports they have obtained Commonwealth Government documents that indicate the Government may support a project to use HIV genotyping to help track people who may have recklessly or deliberately infected others with HIV.

**May 11:** *The Age* reports that visitors to Australia who have HIV may have their movements monitored or be prevented from visiting altogether, under policy options being considered by the national Government.

**May 12:** The plan by the Howard Government to monitor the movements of visitors with HIV in Australia draws widespread criticism internationally and locally. Gay advocates call the policy "disgusting" and "discriminatory". The US Minnesota Daily writes "To deny entry based on HIV status would mean that you are deeming those individuals as 'lesser citizens' or 'lesser humans' than their peers,"

**May 14:** A team of Monash University scientists is appointed to report on which groups or behaviours are responsible for the increasing rate of HIV infections over the past 3 years. The national project, to review clusters of infections occurring between 2004 - 2006, is approved by Health Minister Tony Abbott after a string of high-profile cases raise concern about how state health authorities are managing PLWHA.

**May 15:** The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, which advises against circumcision, deeming it unnecessary, is reviewing its stance, as internationally, circumcision is making a comeback following research which shows the procedure can reduce the risk of HIV infection.

**May 30:** WHO issue new guidelines recommending that doctors everywhere, including those in richer nations, consider routinely offering HIV testing to help identify infections early, before the virus can be spread unwittingly and to maximise the benefits of earlier treatment. This builds on research in the US that has shown that people who do not know they have HIV account for 50 to 70 per cent of new infections.

**June 7:** In SA, Stuart McDonald, is charged with 7 counts of endangering life over allegations he did not tell his sexual partners he had HIV.

**June 8:** Drug company Roche recalls Viracept due to possible contamination, after six patients in Europe reported that their drugs emitted a strange odour. An analysis of the tablets showed they contain higher than normal levels of methane sulfonic acid ethylester.

**June 26:** The Victorian health department's role in supervising PLWHA who may be placing others at risk, comes under renewed scrutiny after Sudanese-born man, Lam Kuoth, 28, is charged with reckless conduct endangering serious injury. The charge relates to a 24 year old woman Kuoth allegedly had unprotected sex within April. Kuoth was being monitored by the Department of Human Services.

**July 10:** In Victoria, another man, Solomon Mwale, 38, faces a committal hearing at the Geelong Magistrates' Court charged with three counts of reckless conduct endangering serious injury after allegedly infecting a woman with HIV and not disclosing he had the virus.

**July 20:** A study published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, shows there has been a 31 per cent increase in the number of new Australian HIV cases over the six years to 2006, with risky sexual behaviour among gay men appearing to have caused the trend.

**July 26:** A paper published in *The American Journal of Pathology* suggests that the tonsils may possess the necessary factors to act as a transmission site for the spread of HIV as a result of oral sex.

**July 31:** 4th International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment, and Prevention begins in Sydney.

**August 6:** In the US, the FDA approve *Celsentri* (maraviroc), for use in combination with other antiretroviral products for the treatment of adults infected with CCR5-tropic HIV-1, It is the first drug in the new class of anti-HIV medications called CCR-5 co-receptor antagonists, but are usually grouped with fusion/entry inhibitors.

**September:** The Step Vaccine trial is halted when data shows that similar numbers of people in both the vaccine and placebo groups have been infected with HIV.

**September:** South Australian, Andre Parenzee is sentenced to nine years in prison. The sentencing judge noted that, even at the time of sentencing, Parenzee had not yet come to terms with the damage he had wrought.

**October:** STEP Vaccine trial participants are warned that data analysis suggests that people who had received the vaccine were at greater risk of HIV infection than those who received the placebo.

**October 12:** The US FDA grants accelerated approval for *ISENTRESS* (*raltegravir*) for treatment of HIV-1 infection in combination with other antiretroviral agents. *Raltegravir* is the first agent of the pharmacological class of antiretroviral agents known as HIV integrase strand transfer inhibitors, commonly referred to as integrase inhibitors.

**October:** The NSW Crimes Act is amended so that a person who 'intentionally' or 'recklessly' causes another person to become infected with HIV can be charged with grievous bodily harm. It is unclear exactly what 'recklessly' means or whether having practiced safe sex can be a defence. Reckless infection can incur up to 14 years in prison. Intentional infection can incur up to 25 years in prison.

**October 31:** UNAIDS brings together a range of stakeholders, including Justice Michael Kirby from Australia, for a three-day consultation to discuss the trend of criminalisation of HIV in the context of national responses to AIDS. A clear message from the meeting is that criminal law is a very blunt tool to deal with HIV, and creates disincentives to learning about one's HIV status and accessing health and other services.

**November 12:** The WHO revises the number of people infected with HIV to 33.2 million, down from 39.5 million. The lower figure is based on newer, more accurate surveys in India and several African countries.

**November 27:** Sydney's St Vincent's Hospital, closes its specialist 10-bed HIV/AIDS unit so it can rent out the ward in a private deal with the Royal Australian Navy. Six beds for HIV patients are relocated to an oncology ward.

**December 1:** 19<sup>th</sup> Annual World Aids Day. The Australian campaign theme is: 'HIV/AIDS: Prevention is everybody's business'.

**December 3:** ABC screens a documentary "*Rampant: How A City Stopped A Plague*" about the early days of the HIV epidemic in Sydney. During this year in Australia, 1,051 people test positive for HIV, 161 are first diagnosed with AIDS and 20 die.

## 2008

**January 10:** In response to a high number of HIV reports in Victoria, the Victorian AIDS Council runs a new ad campaign to catch gay men's attention. Four full-page advertisements appear in two gay newspapers in Melbourne showing men having sex, with a genitalia-covering dialogue box discussing safe sex issues.

**January 18:** In the US, the FDA approve the second-generation NNRTI *Intelence* (*etravirine*, formerly TMC125). The drug is only approved for treatment-experienced adults.

**January 30:** Swiss HIV experts produce the first-ever consensus statement saying heterosexuals with HIV on effective antiretroviral therapy and without STIs are likely to be sexually non-infectious. The statement is published in the *Bulletin of Swiss Medicine (Bulletin des médecins suisses)*. The statement also discusses the implications for doctors; for people with HIV; for HIV prevention; and the legal system. The controversial statement ignites worldwide debate about its analyses and especially its applicability to gay men.

**February 1:** The WHO, UNAIDS and CDC, respond to a study published by Switzerland's Federal AIDS Commission, stating that correct and consistent use of condoms is still the best way to prevent the spread of the AIDS virus between sexual partners, and that while people taking anti-retrovirals may have undetectable amounts of HIV virus in their blood at certain stages of their treatment, it has not been proven to completely eliminate the risk of transmitting HIV.

**February 18:** PLWHA NSW rebrands as Positive Life NSW.

**March 3:** A new study by the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinic Research estimates that HIV infection rates could rise 73 percent in Victoria and 20 percent in Queensland by 2015 if current trends continue. Rates in New South Wales are predicted to decline.

**May:** In the US, a homeless man who spat in the mouth and eye of a police officer and then taunted him, saying he was HIV-positive, was sentenced to 35 years in prison for harassing a public servant with a deadly weapon: his saliva, even though saliva does not transmit HIV.

**June 4:** Melbourne researchers suggest that applying a weak oestrogen cream onto men's foreskins, may increase the thickness of skin and generate a barrier to stop HIV passing into their bodies from an infected sexual partner. It stems from earlier work which found that apart from unprotected anal sex, men are most likely to contract the disease when the virus passes through the skin on the inside of the foreskin.

**June:** The Swiss federal court rules that a man criminally liable for passing on HIV to his partner, despite the fact that he had not been tested for HIV at the time of having sex. The court decided that since he had a history of having unprotected sex and risky behaviour and was aware of the HIV-positive diagnosis of a previous partner, he should have suspected that he could have had HIV.

**July 6:** The first Australian research on HIV "superinfection", which is when a person becomes infected with multiple strains of the virus, shows that men with HIV who practise unsafe sex are becoming infected with additional strains of the virus. The study of 145 HIV-positive Melbourne men concluded that up to 4% could be "superinfected".

**July 11:** Swiss pharmaceutical company Roche announce they are suspending its HIV research because none of its pending medicines represents a significant improvement over existing drugs.

**July 17:** Researchers announce that a genetic variation that once protected people in sub-Saharan Africa from a now extinct form of malaria may have left them more vulnerable to infection by HIV and could account for around 11 percent of HIV infections in Africa. The mutation also has a benefit, in that it also slows disease progression, giving patients an average of an extra two years of life.

**August 5:** The US announces it will end its two-decade ban on people with HIV entering the country.

**August 8:** In the closing plenary of the international AIDS conference in Mexico, Justice Edwin Cameron, a High Court judge from South Africa, pleads for the criminalisation of HIV transmission to end. He argues that criminalisation does not help reduce transmission, and suggests there is mounting evidence that it in fact harms testing and prevention initiatives and increases stigma for people living with HIV.

**August:** UNAIDS publishes its 2008 report on the global AIDS epidemic. The report warns that the target of universal access by 2010 will be unattainable unless the global response to HIV is substantially strengthened and accelerated.

**October:** Dr Françoise Barré-Sinoussi and Dr Luc Montagnier are awarded a Nobel Prize for medicine for their groundbreaking work in uncovering the virus responsible for AIDS. Although Dr Montagnier and US researcher Dr Robert Gallo are often co-credited with discovering HIV, the Nobel jury made no mention of Dr Gallo in its citation.

**October 7:** Researchers from the CDC say that the result of a review of 15 studies involving 53,567 gay and bisexual men in the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, India, Taiwan, Peru and the Netherlands showed that there is not enough evidence to say circumcision protects men from getting HIV during sex with other men even as studies show it protects them when having sex with women.

**November:** German doctors claim that they have cured a man of HIV by giving him a bone marrow transplant using a bone marrow donor who had a genetic mutation known to help the body resist HIV. Medical specialists greet the claims with caution.

During this year in Australia, 1,012 people test positive for HIV, 104 are diagnosed with AIDS and 19 die. An estimated 17,444 people including 12 053 people aged 15 – 49 years are living with HIV infection in Australia at the end of 2008.

## 2009

**January:** Melbourne man Michael Neal, is found guilty of infecting people with HIV has been sentenced to 18 years and nine months gaol with Judge David Parsons stating Neal sought to become his "own version of the grim reaper".

**January 24:** Dr Alex Wodak, a physician who has worked in HIV since it was identified in the 1980s, calls for parents to be educated about the benefits of circumcision after research showed it reduced the likelihood of transmission between heterosexuals in Africa.

**February 25:** It is reported that a court in Geneva, Switzerland, in the first ruling of its kind in the world, quashed the 18 month prison sentence of a young man with HIV previously convicted of exposing others to HIV, after accepting that the risk of sexual HIV transmission on successful treatment is close to zero.

**March 18:** The Pope tells reporters flying with him to Cameroon that AIDS was "a tragedy that cannot be overcome by money alone, and that cannot be overcome through the distribution of condoms, which even aggravates the problems". A day later, after Governments and community organisations attack the comments, the Vatican retreats slightly, changing the statement to "risks aggravating the problems".

**April 18.** George Pell, Archbishop of Sydney, supports the views of the Pope on condoms in an article written for the SMH. The president of the AIDS Council of NSW, Marc Orr, said the cardinal's comments contradicted all evidence that condoms reduced the transmission of HIV.

**May 26:** The National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS requests that people, particularly the media, to stop using the terms "AIDS" and "PLWHA" in favour of words with fewer stigmas. They suggest that misuse of the word "AIDS" in media reports, such as "AIDS victims and carriers" are insulting and contribute to stigma and discrimination. They suggest that HIV is used alone, as it encompasses all stages of the disease, including AIDS. People Living with HIV (PLHIV) is recommended to be the replacement for the long-standing term PLWHA.

**July:** Commonwealth Laws giving better equality and recognising lesbian and gay relationships come into effect. These laws are tipped to have a negative impact on People with HIV with partners and receiving Government Centrelink benefits.

**August 9:** The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations calls on the Government to provide urgent funding for international HIV prevention in the Asian region.

**August:** The Willoughby branch of the Young Liberals puts a motion calling for the State Government to cease funding the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. The motion says it is "inappropriate to subsidise an event that promotes promiscuity and deviant sexual practices when the HIV/AIDS rate in Australia has increased due to unprotected sex between men".

**August 11:** The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations, National Hepatitis B Alliance and Australasian Society for HIV Medicine join forces to publicly complain about the “lack of transparency and procedural fairness” in decision-making on new tests in Australia. One is a test which checks patients for resistance to anti-retrovirals used to manage HIV. This was first submitted in 2003 and will not be considered for a second time until late this year.

**August 30:** A surge in sexually transmissible infection rates prompts the NSW Government to revive the safe sex message for teenagers and young adults in a new campaign. A third of sexually active teenagers have their first experience before the age of 14 but almost a third did not know they could catch STIs from oral sex.

**September 1:** A treatment for HIV-associated facial wasting, Poly-L-lactic acid injection (Sculptra) is listed on the PBS.

**September 9:** Data released at the Australasian HIV/AIDS Conference 2009, in Brisbane shows that while the national figure remained stable at about a thousand new HIV diagnoses in 2008, Victoria and Queensland recorded increases after they reduced spending on HIV/AIDS prevention programs.

**September 9:** Swiss university researchers announce they have reproduced a gene structure found in a South American monkey that could act against HIV. The discovery could pave the way to a new treatment against AIDS. Discovered in 2004 in owl monkeys by a group of scientists at New York's Columbia University, the gene brings about the production of a protein that has shown resistance against the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

**September 24:** American and Thai researchers announce that a vaccine has reduced the risk of being infected by almost a third. The results are from the world's largest vaccine trial of more than 16,000 volunteers carried out by the US Army and the Thai Ministry of Public Health. The results are almost immediately called into question by experts in the field.

**October 6:** Using FOI, *The Australian* obtain an official independent review of the national strategies set up to combat HIV, hepatitis C and sexually transmitted infections which suggests a high-ranking committee failed to set goals or attempt to measure what impact its initiatives were having. The review also cites concerns that the committee failed to engage with relevant organisations, did not listen to their advice and did not even deal effectively with recommendations from its own subcommittees.

**October 22:** NAPWA publishes *The Criminalisation of HIV Transmission in Australia: Legality, Morality and Reality*.

**November 1:** President Barak Obama signs a change in the law to remove the travel ban on people infected with HIV visiting the United States. It takes effect from January 4, 2010.

**November 30:** A New South Wales online survey reports that many members of Generation Y believe they can get HIV from sharing cups, hugging and mosquito bites, despite more than 20 years of campaigns to dispel HIV myths.

During this year in Australia, 1,062 people test positive for HIV, 90 are diagnosed with AIDS and 4 die following AIDS. By 31 December 2009, 29,395 diagnoses of HIV infection, 10,446 diagnoses of AIDS and 6,776 deaths following AIDS have occurred in Australia. Allowing for double counting and deaths from other causes, there are an estimated 20,171 people living with diagnosed HIV infection in Australia at the end of 2009.

## 2010

**March 3:** An Australian study that uses mathematical modelling to predict infection trends, predicts that HIV rates in Australia will rise by up to 73 per cent over the next seven years, partly because fewer people are using condoms. NSW is the only state not predicted to have an increase, with the number of new infections expected to decline.

**March 3:** ACON calls on the Government to introduce rapid testing for HIV following disturbing survey results from a study in Queensland which showed that there are still a proportion of men who remain unaware that they have contracted the virus.

**April 12:** Australia's Red Cross Blood Service announces a review of its policy which prevents many homosexual men from donating blood.

**April 14:** The *Sydney Star Observer* reports that a gay couple from rural NSW have become the first people to successfully privately sue under HIV vilification laws. The couple were awarded \$10,000 by the NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal, for the emotional toll they experienced after former friends threatened to shoot them and began telling town members they had AIDS.

**April 22:** The Government announces its National Transmissible Infection and Blood Borne Viruses Strategies. The Sixth National HIV/AIDS Strategy is one strategy. The others cover STIs, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C & Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

**April 28:** It is reported that a NSW man successfully sued his ex-boyfriend for knowingly infecting him with HIV, with the courts awarding the unnamed plaintiff over \$750,000 for his pain, suffering, loss of income and loss of life expectancy. Community organisations express concern that the criminalisation of HIV transmission may lead to further stigmatisation and a trend towards not testing.

**May 17:** Scientists suggest that the worldwide eradication of smallpox may have, inadvertently, helped the spread of HIV infection, because the vaccine used to wipe out smallpox offers some protection against HIV and with it no longer being used, HIV has flourished. It is too early to say whether reintroducing smallpox vaccination would be beneficial.

**May 25:** A 31-year-old Zimbabwean-born Australian citizen, who works as a circus performer, appears in a Sydney court for an extradition hearing and will appear in a Queensland Court facing two charges relating to knowingly transmitting a serious disease. The man has been HIV-positive since 1997.

**May 25:** Thirty years of safe sex advice were partially dented at the 2010 International Microbicides Conference when results of a survey looking at lubricant use amongst a group of women and gay men found that those who used lubricants for anal sex were three times more likely to acquire rectal gonorrhoea, chlamydia or syphilis when compared to those who used no lubricant.

**May 30:** The Queensland President of the AMA, Dr Mason Stevenson, says there is need for a national register to monitor the behaviour of patients with HIV, highlighting the case of a circus acrobat accused of knowingly spreading the virus to possibly hundreds of women.

**July 19:** A major expert panel recommends, in a paper published by the Journal of the American Medical Association, that people with HIV be treated when they reached a threshold of 500 CD4 cells per microlitre or below, whether they have symptoms of AIDS or not.

**October 19:** Australia reports that 2009 was the highest number of new HIV infections in almost 20 years, but cases of infectious syphilis, gonorrhoea and hepatitis have dropped, leading experts to conclude the safe sex message is getting through. In 2009, about 1050 new cases of HIV were reported, a level not reached since 1993. The number has remained relatively stable for four years, giving researchers hope that the disease was being restrained.

**November 23:** Pope Benedict XVI says in a new book that condom use can be a lesser evil than transmitting HIV, since it indicates the HIV-positive person is aiming to protect their partner from a deadly infection. The Pope made it clear that he was not justifying or condoning gay sex or heterosexual sex outside of a marriage. Elsewhere in the book he reaffirms the Vatican opposition to homosexual acts and artificial contraception and reaffirms the inviolability of marriage between man and woman.

**November 24:** The iPrEx study, carried out on four continents, looking at Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) shows that a daily dose of the oral antiretroviral drug *Truvada* reduced the number of HIV infections among sexually active gay men by 44 per cent.

By 31 December 2010, 30,486 cases of HIV infection had been diagnosed in Australia. The number of new HIV diagnoses was 1,043. The annual number of new HIV diagnoses has remained relatively stable at around 1 000 over the past five years. An estimated 21,391 people were living with diagnosed HIV infection in Australia at the end of 2010.

## 2011

**February 14:** Australian scientists have been able to cure HIV-like infections in mice by boosting their immune systems using a hormone known as Interleukin-7 which stimulates the body's response to an infection, causing it to clear the virus. This process is called immune exhaustion. The findings may lead to a cure for chronic viral infections like HIV, hepatitis B and C, as well as bacterial infections such as tuberculosis.

**February 27:** Former High Court Judge Michael Kirby calls for a more compassion in the clergy when it comes to HIV/AIDS.

**March 4:** Researchers announce they have succeeded in genetically engineering vital immune cells making them resistant to HIV infection. Scientists took CD-4 or T-cells from a HIV-positive patients' blood, then snipped out a single gene - the first time such a precise alteration has been achieved on a meaningful scale. Put back into a patient, the modified T-cells were no longer able to make a particular protein that HIV grabs - like a molecular doorknob - to enter the cells that it ravages.

**April 8:** In South Australia, Stuart James McDonald, 43, is convicted of endangering the lives of two men with whom he had unprotected sex in 2005. Both contracted HIV. McDonald stood trial for endangering the lives of eight men, but was acquitted of the other counts.

**April 10:** The UK Government announce they will be lifting the ban on gay men donating blood following concerns that the existing blanket ban is discriminatory and could breach equality laws.

**April 11:** The *New York Times* reports on whether the longstanding ban on transplants of HIV-infected organs should be dropped, as other people with HIV could receive the organs.

**April 18:** Scientists announce they have abandoned a study that was investigating whether a daily dose of Truvada could prevent women from becoming infected with HIV, after the treatment was found to be ineffective. The result is surprising, because an earlier drug trial (iPrEx study) showed that the same drug was effective in preventing infection among a test group of gay men.

**April 28:** A research paper *Community Models of HIV Testing for Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM): systematic review*, suggests that Australia consider introduce Rapid HIV testing for MSM. The report forms part of a review of HIV policy being conducted by the peak organisation for the medical and health sector in HIV, the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine. The Therapeutic Drug Administration (TDA) is currently evaluating one such testing kit.

**May 18:** The *Sydney Star Observer* reports that doctors in Berlin have declared a man cured of HIV, five years after he received radiation therapy to kill of most of his immune cells followed by a bone marrow transplant from a donor with a genetic mutation that provides immunity to HIV. The procedure caused neurological damage and carried high risk of complications including death, meaning that the procedure is unlikely to be repeated.

**May 21:** *The Lancet* reports on an international study which shows that treatment with antiretroviral drugs does dramatically lower the chances of a Person Living with HIV transmitting HIV to their negative heterosexual partner.

**May 21:** A medical centre in Bondi Junction is ordered by the NSW Supreme Court to pay almost \$300,000 in damages to a man who was infected with HIV after his former female partner was wrongly given the all-clear by a doctor. The man would not have contracted the virus if the centre's administration staff had updated his then-partner's contact details and sent a recall letter to her current address.

**May 24:** It is reported that an unknown number of Australian soldiers and contractors might have been exposed to blood-borne diseases such as hepatitis or HIV after staff at Defence's main hospital unit in the Middle East failed to sterilise surgical equipment properly. The breach of protocol at the al-Minhad air base continued for 19 months in 2009 and 2010 during heavy fighting and significant casualties for Australian troops, but soldiers were not alerted to the problem until last week.

**May:** Queensland Association for Healthy Communities places advertisements in bus shelters which show a fully clothed gay male couple hugging and holding an unopened condom packet. These are taken down by the advertising company following complaints orchestrated by the Australian Christian Lobby (which initially seemed to be a series of individual complaints). They reinstate the ads after the action is reported in the media.

**May:** In the US, the FDA approve *Endurant* (rilpivirine, previously TMC-278) an NNRTI drug.

**June 10:** The UN General Assembly adopts the *Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: Intensifying our Efforts to Eliminate HIV/AIDS*. Australia was heavily involved in the development of the document. Among many actions, it calls for member states to set targets and intensify efforts to eliminate the transmission of HIV. Laws and policies that adversely impact on the successful, effective and equitable delivery of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support programmes to people living with and affected by HIV are also to be reviewed.

**August 10:** In the US, the FDA approve Complera (rilpivirine, tenofovir and emtricitabine), for people starting HIV treatment for the first time. It is the second complete treatment ARV treatment in 1 tablet after Atripla and contains NRTI and NNRTI drug classes.

**August 17:** Under a new UK health policy covering intentional or reckless transmission of infections, a 28yo man pleads guilty to grievous bodily harm and is jailed for 14 months for knowing infecting his 24yo girlfriend with genital herpes. She developed herpes within 2 months of starting their relationship, but he initially denied giving it to her. In sentencing, the judge said it was a “betrayal in a relationship in which you professed love”. Sexual health charities condemn the conviction saying the health policy is for ‘serious or life threatening conditions’, not trivial conditions which are wrongly stigmatised and equate it to children giving each other chicken pox (another herpes virus).

**October:** *The Origins of Aids* by Dr Jacques Pépin, (Cambridge University Press) is published. It explores all the research and theories on the origins of HIV to date in detail and includes some original research. He confirms the *Natural Transfer Theory* as the most likely theory of origin and provides a detailed persuasive narrative of the most likely path the virus took (amplification via *Contaminated Needle Theory* combined with *Colonialism Theory*, followed by sexual transmission) during the years before its discovery in the US in 1981. Dr Pépin also provides tantalizing evidence he discovered in old medical records, describing what may have been early AIDS outbreaks. Dr Max Essex, chairman of the AIDS Initiative at the Harvard School of Public Health, describes the work as “scientifically hard, objective scholarship”.

**November 3:** La Trobe University’s Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society argue that boys and young men should be vaccinated against human papilloma virus (HPV) to help protect against anal, penile and head and neck cancers and to benefit women’s health. People with a compromised immune system, such as those who are HIV-positive, have a well established increased risk of HPV related cancers of all types.

**November 23:** According to a report by UNAIDS, the world’s AIDS epidemic has hit a plateau, with 2.7 million people becoming infected each year for the past five years. The report also reveals the changing shape of the epidemic, with more people than ever before are living with HIV and deaths and new infections steadily dropping.

**December 1:** Bill Whitaker’s paper *Revolutionising HIV Prevention and Maximising Treatment Impact in Australia* is published. It examines strategies to meet Australia’s obligations under the UN *Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: Intensifying our Efforts to Eliminate HIV/AIDS* adopted on June 10. It examines studies which have recently improved our understanding of HIV and argues for earlier treatment, using treatment as one strategy to reduce transmission, making Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) available for HIV-negative MSM, making rapid testing available and mobilising the community.

**December 25:** The *Sydney Morning Herald* reports that travellers are being warned to avoid getting tattoos in Bali, after a West Australian resident was apparently infected with HIV. “All the evidence points to a tattoo received recently in Bali as being the source of an HIV infection”, the West Australian Department of Health says on its website.

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The first edition of this chronology of HIV/AIDS events was published in September 2005. This is the sixth edition which was revised and finalised in **January 2012**.

Many sources were used to compile the information, including “*The Origins of Aids*”, by Dr Jacques Pépin, (Cambridge University Press, 2011), “*Learning to Trust, Australian Responses to AIDS*” by Paul Sendziuk (UNSW Press, 2003), “*The River*” by Edward Hooper (Penguin, 2000), Acon’s 1995 booklet “*Strengthening the Community – Acon and the HIV Epidemic in NSW*”, “*History of AIDS. Emergence and Origin of a Modern Pandemic*” by Dr Mirko D. Grmek (Princeton University Press, 1990), “*And The Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic*” by Randy Shilts (1987), and the CDCs *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*. Journals are noted in the text. Newspaper reports and information from many websites were also used, including but not limited to: [aidshistory.nih.gov](http://aidshistory.nih.gov), [www.aidsorigins.com](http://www.aidsorigins.com), [www.accessinfo.org.au](http://www.accessinfo.org.au), [www.aids.net.au](http://www.aids.net.au), [www.aidsaction.org](http://www.aidsaction.org), [www.aidsmap.com](http://www.aidsmap.com), [www.aegis.com](http://www.aegis.com), [www.avert.org](http://www.avert.org), [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov), [www.gmhp.demon.co.uk](http://www.gmhp.demon.co.uk), [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org), [www.library.ucsf.edu](http://www.library.ucsf.edu), [www.news.com.au](http://www.news.com.au), [www.newscientist.com](http://www.newscientist.com), [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), [www.pressureworks.org](http://www.pressureworks.org), [www.smh.com.au](http://www.smh.com.au), [www.thebody.com](http://www.thebody.com), [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com) and [www.worldaidsday.org.au](http://www.worldaidsday.org.au).

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Annual Australian HIV/AIDS statistics are as estimated at date of publication.

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