

Honouring, Valuing and Inspiring PLHIV Leadership

The Positive Leadership Development Institute (PLDI) Australia is a unique community service and business partnership that aims to build the resilience and leadership capacities of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Australia.

The Institute is based upon the principles of the greater involvement and meaningful engagement of people living with HIV and is focused upon placing people living with HIV as central and vital in all aspects of the Institute's programs and services.

The Institute's leadership theory is based upon the five practices and ten commitments for effective leadership (Kouzes and Posner, 1987) and this theory is interwoven with activities which also explore emotional intelligence and psychological resilience over a 3-day residential workshop.

Model the way

Integrity embodies many aspects. It includes numerous qualities that are essential to leadership. We believe that a Positive Leadership Development Institute leader **Models The Way** by showing integrity.

Embodied in this are the values of honesty, transparency, credibility, graciousness, generosity and humility. These essential leadership attributes are a part of the learning and self awareness that is experienced in the leadership workshop, and are threaded throughout the whole experience of the residential weekend retreat. Many participants have graduated from the Institute feeling inspired to become more involved in the various programs and activities of the HIV community as volunteers with energy and enthusiasm, and with a hunger to influence and play a bigger part of the 'cause' and carry out their grand ideas of fighting stigma.

We believe that setting an example that is a standard of excellence for others to follow is essential. Leaders treat others with respect and this includes not only listening to differences in opinions but accepting and understanding of the diversity of people and their context.

Inspire a shared vision

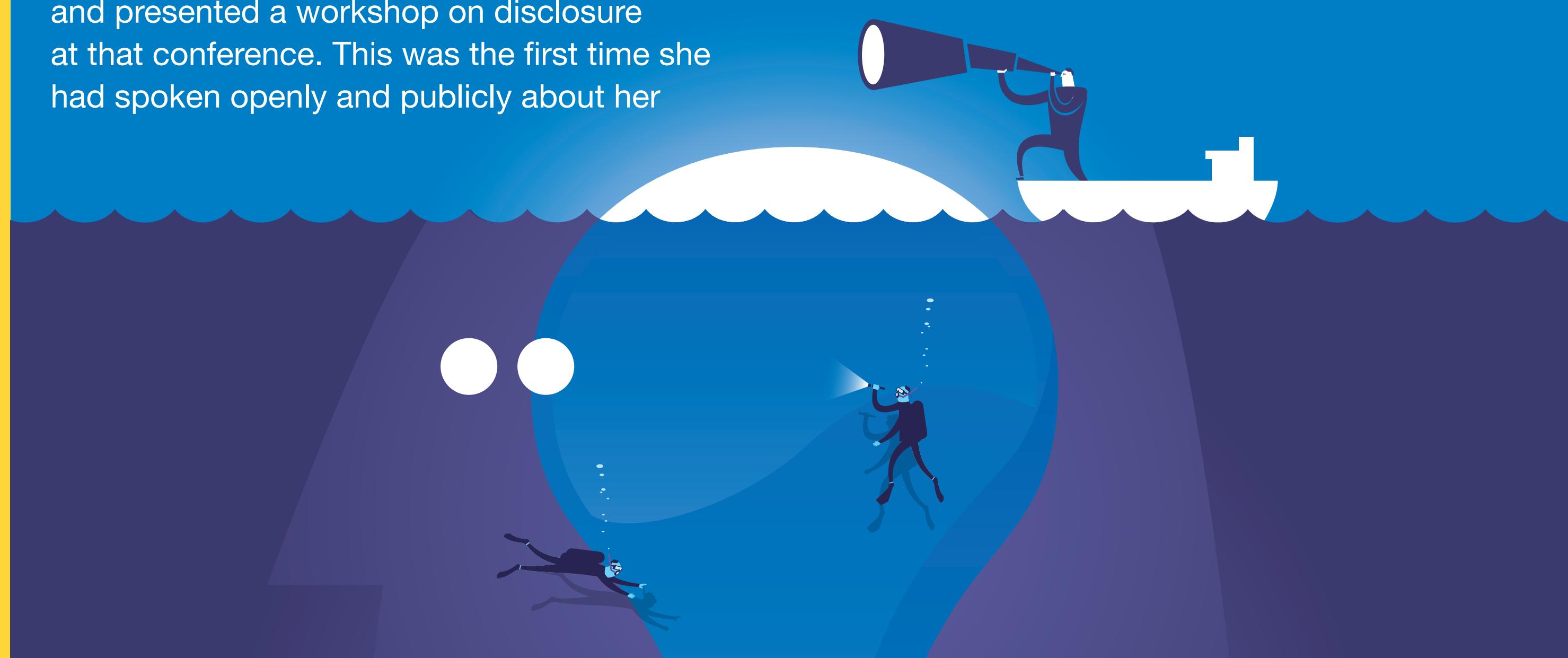
The Positive Leadership Development Institute promotes the principle of **Inspiring a Shared Vision** and this is supported by the principles of Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV (GIPA) and Meaningful Involvement of People Living with HIV (MIPA) which are explored in the course. Participants discuss and adopt these principles over the course of the Institute.

Some participants come to PLDI with extensive experience in the HIV positive community; some are newly diagnosed or have never engaged with the community before.

One female PLDI graduate went on to become involved in the organising and planning of a national conference for HIV positive women and presented a workshop on disclosure at that conference. This was the first time she had spoken openly and publicly about her

status in front of a group of people in Australia, despite having worked in the HIV sector for the previous 18 months. She later became involved in a consumer advisory group for one of her state based People Living with HIV (PLHIV) organisations and has continued to be invited to deliver her disclosure workshop at state and national events. She continues to lead and encourage other women to stand up, be heard and has become a leading voice for women living with HIV across the country.

The three days at the Institute inspires people to want to act on inspiring a shared vision and continuing to be involved with PLDI is just one of many ways in which they can do that.



Challenge the process

Challenging the process is a crucial part of every PLDI workshop. We challenge participants by asking them to 'trust the process' and suspend their normal expectations of a set agenda and a formal schedule and 'hand over' the weekend to the team of facilitators and the people they are with.

Bringing together a diverse range of 12 PLHIV with the purpose of inspiring them to step into leadership roles means a lot of lived experiences, regardless of age, are brought together in an intensive weekend of self exploration.

For some the workshop becomes a space to vent pent-up frustration or grief developed over years of watching and acting in community efforts. And while the process absolutely honours the lived experience of everyone, it is not a support group or therapy. It's about taking our combined energy forward.

In one workshop two participants, both in their twenties and with only a handful of years living positive between them, challenged this status quo of the 'survivor narrative'; not combatively, but constructively. Sharing their own narratives as younger PLHIV, they were able to gently remind all of us that there are many experiences that cross the generational divide and it's our differences in our lived experience as PLHIV that make us stronger as a community.

Enabling others to act

Leaders foster collaboration and build spirited teams and understand that mutual respect is what sustains extraordinary efforts. By **Enabling Others to Act** they strengthen others, making each person feel capable and powerful.

Attending the PLDI workshop is occasionally met with uncertainty and unease, as participants meet new people in a space which is often unknown and unexpected. Some participants leave the workshop invigorated and ready to take on the world, whereas others, find their leadership qualities in enabling those around them to act.

Despite one PLDI graduate's exemplary participation and engagement over the course of the weekend, when invited to apply to become a facilitator of the workshop he declined this invitation, as he still didn't identify as being a leader in his community.

But while he himself still doesn't identify as a leader, he is instilling leadership qualities in others in his local community, and broadening his network nationally. He actively seeks out training with his local PLHIV organisation which is enabling him to strengthen his leadership qualities even further, and it will be exciting to see him take the next steps in his leadership journey.

encourage the heart

Accomplishing extraordinary things is hard work. To keep hope and determination alive, leaders recognise contributions that individuals make and so extraordinary leaders celebrate accomplishments - they make people feel like heroes, they **Encourage the Heart**.

Sharing the experience of a weekend with your HIV positive peers, learning about the history of the epidemic, sharing stories and tales of brothers and sisters who are no longer with us and openly discussing ways in which we as HIV positive people build our resilience in the face of stigma and discrimination, is a bonding experience and one that is truly unique to this workshop.

Through this process, celebrating the wins for both individuals and our community starts to come naturally for PLDI graduates as the principal of encouraging the heart is put into practice.

At the World AIDS Conference in 2014, PLDI graduates took part in the planning and organisation of the conference, using their knowledge as well as the 5 principles of leadership to steer the conference forward. Another graduate became the public face of HIV in Australia over the course of the conference, articulating a contemporary view of HIV in Australia while acknowledging the challenges faced globally for our brothers and sisters.

The energy created from attending the PLDI workshop is second to none. Graduates learn that they are an important part of something bigger and recognise that as a leader each person is important, each person has value. They take the energy from the weekend and apply it in ways that make a genuine difference to their communities. As that graduate realises that they are indeed a leader, they remember that you can only achieve your goals by encouraging the heart.



PLDI has now seen over 70 graduates from all walks of life and from all across Australia and New Zealand to come together to commit to a plan of personal and professional leadership growth and collective action against HIV stigma.

Pre and post test psychometric testing as well as follow-up interviews at one and six months demonstrate increased and sustained levels of resilience capacity and numerous examples of how individuals living with HIV are utilising what they have learnt in their personal, professional and community lives.

Supporting a new and emerging generation of PLHIV leaders is necessary and vital to continuing the partnership approach to HIV in Australia and beyond. We understand the profoundly negative effect that HIV stigma has upon the response to HIV we need to support strong and confident leaders to challenge stigma and exemplify resilience.

Ramping up the Partnership Response

PLDI is a unique community service partnership that aims to build the resilience and leadership capacities of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Australia and New Zealand and was borne as a community response to HIV stigma identified in the NAPWHA Stigma Audit (2012). The Institute is based upon the principles of the greater involvement, meaningful engagement, and central role of PLHIV in strategies to end HIV.

The 3-day residential workshop aims to enhance emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and leadership skills. All planning, delivery and evaluation of the courses are led by PLHIV.

The support and engagement structure of PLDI is a first of its kind in community organisational development in Australia and expands the notion of partnership.

PLDI offers stratified partnership options based upon the capacity of participating organisations. Partners are able to choose from four options, being a networking partner through to collaborative partner. Each level has different attributes in relation to definition, relationship, characteristics and resources required.

2015/16 PARTNERSHIP OPTIONS

1. Collaborating Partner – Institute Oversight Team

Collaborating partners commit to a 3 year minimum contribution of \$10,000 per annum to PLDI operational costs and are able to join a 3 year Memorandum of Understanding – currently in place until July 2017.

Collaborating partners have the option to join the Oversight Team of the Institute who collectively decide upon policies, procedures and operational parameters of the Institute.

Supports the PLDI program through advertising the program to potential participants. All collaborating partners will take part in leading the partner review process designed to evaluate PLDI™ services and systems and participant in planning days and retreats.

2. Cooperating Partner – Scholarship Sponsor

Cooperating partners commit to providing scholarship support for participants and can choose the quantum and allocation parameters per annum. Examples of current Scholarship Sponsors are pictured right.

Additionally, cooperating partners support the PLDI program through advertising the program to potential participants as well as taking part in an annual partner review process designed to evaluate PLDI services and systems.

3. Coordinating Partner

These partners support PLDI program through advertising the program to potential participants and is able to offer value in kind services and/or products to the Institute.

A coordination partner also takes part in an annual partner review process designed to evaluate PLDI™ services and systems.

4. Networking Partner

Supports the PLDI program through advertising the program to potential participants and may also include sponsoring a participant to a course or workshop.

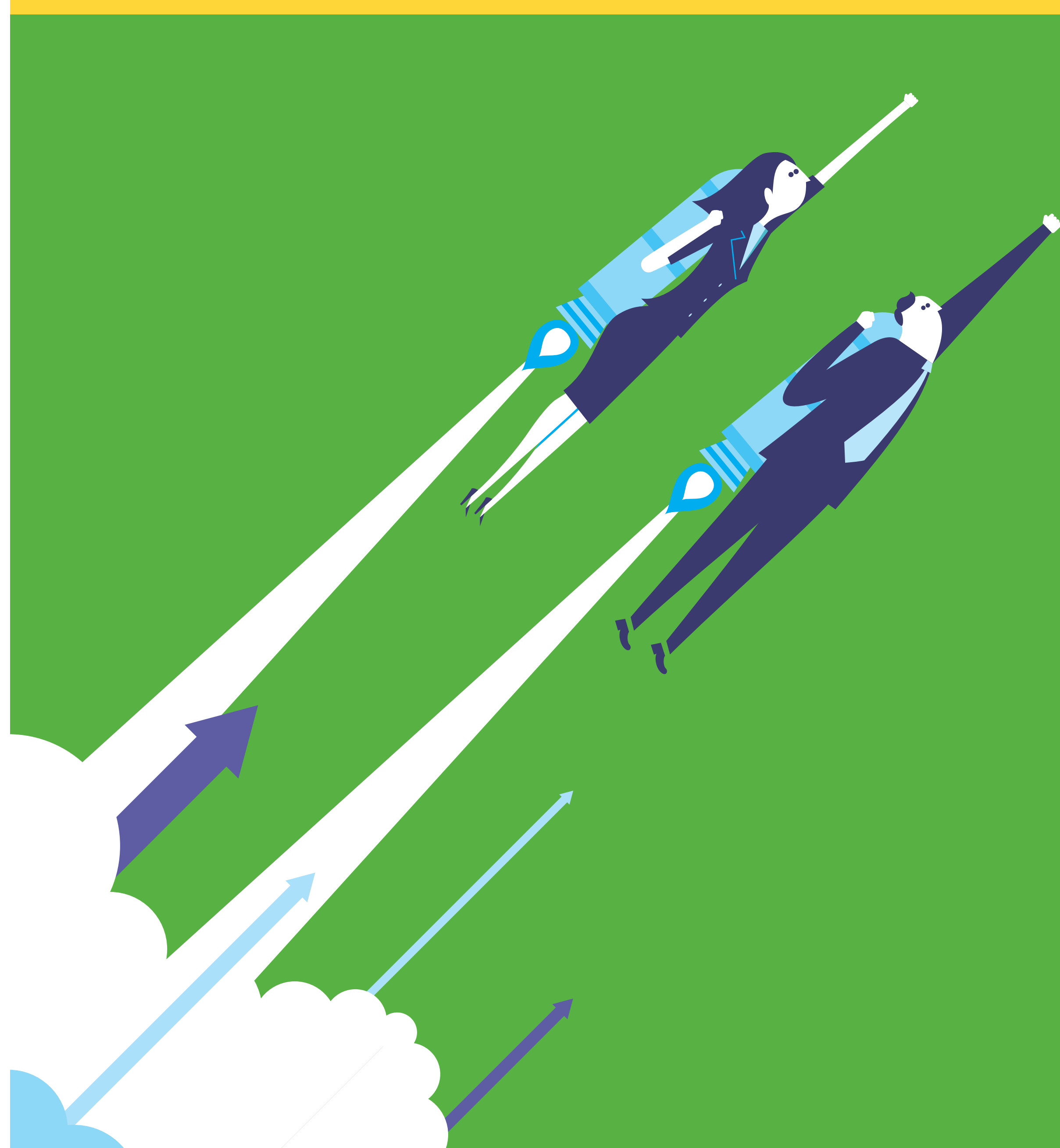
2015/16 COLLABORATING PARTNERS



2015/16 COOPERATING PARTNERS



2015/16 COORDINATING AND NETWORKING PARTNERS



With over 70 graduates from across Australasia and a leadership team of 8 facilitators from this alumni, PLDI is now offered across the country with a waiting list of over 100 PLHIV. Over 25 businesses and organisations in every state/territory in Australia have committed over \$100,000 per annum in sponsorship to this remarkable effort.

PLDI Australia has a flat management model with the collaborating partners forming an oversight committee to make decisions regarding the planning and implementation of the workshops and associated

activities. This helps to ensure that the needs of the diversity of people living with HIV across the country are met through the program, while facilitating greater connections between existing organisations.

Supporting an emerging generation of PLHIV leaders is vital to continuing the partnership approach to HIV in Australia. A collaboration of organisations can create the resources to invest in positive leadership, and a structure to support strong and confident PLHIV leaders to challenge stigma, exemplify resilience and be an asset to the HIV response.



**Positive Leadership
Development Institute™**
Australia

SUBMISSION ID
257

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From Personal Leadership Aspirations to Building Stronger Communities

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

In a ground breaking report on the effect of HIV stigma in Australia, the Stigma Audit (National Association of People living with HIV Australia, 2012), resilience was identified as a key factor in determining how people deal with HIV stigma. This report encouraged the development of programs that focused

on building emotional intelligence and resilience against HIV stigma. A scan of global initiatives found a highly successful PLHIV run leadership development workshop operating in Canada by the Ontario AIDS Network. This program is part of their Positive Leadership Development Institute (PLDI)™.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

This structured workshop is facilitated by PLHIV. The workshop is 'residential', ensuring a continuous flow of interactive group dynamics that involve empowering conversations and developing connections.

It is a national program emphasising diversity regarding gender, sexuality and cultural backgrounds, including indigenous participation.

PLDI PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING RESULTS

Emotional Intelligence refers to an ability to recognise the meanings of emotions and their relationships, and to reason and problem-solve on the basis of them. Emotional intelligence is involved in the capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion-related feelings, understand the information of those emotions, and manage them.

Psychological Resilience should be considered a process, rather than a trait to be had and it can be learned and developed by virtually anyone. People who demonstrate resilience are people with positive emotionality; they are keen to effectively balance negative emotions with positive ones.

The results below are based upon the first 58 PLDI graduates.

Table 1: Emotional Identification, Perception, and Expression: Ability to characterize emotions in oneself and in others

	Before taking the PLDI course	6 months following the PLDI course
	/100	/100
Average	74.2	79.3
High	91	92
Low	52	32

Table 2: Emotional Facilitation of Thought: Ability/Willingness to use feelings constructively; to let them guide you

	Before taking the PLDI course	6 months following the PLDI course
	/100	/100
Average	75	79.3
High	95	92
Low	34	32

Table 3: Emotional Understanding: Ability to understand and analyze emotions, and solve emotional problems

	Before taking the PLDI course	6 months following the PLDI course
	/100	/100
Average	82	86
High	94	96
Low	58	76

Table 4: Emotional Management: Ability to take responsibility for one's emotions

	Before taking the PLDI course	6 months following the PLDI course
	/100	/100
Average	77.4	79.7
High	89	94
Low	41	52

Table 5: Ego Maturity: Attaining emotional growth and maturity

	Before taking the PLDI course	6 months following the PLDI course
	/100	/100
Average	68.2	73.7
High	86	91
Low	19	60

Table 6: Resilience: Ability to properly adapt to stress and adversity and when faced with difficult experiences, can rise above them with ease

	Pre course	Post course	at 1 month	at 6 months
	/100	/100	/100	/100
Average	59.6	64.8	66	63
High	94	91	80	76
Low	22	60	40	34

Conclusion:

On average, PLDI graduates are demonstrating increased and sustained levels of emotional intelligence and psychological resilience. This data is supported by the qualitative interviews done at 1 and 6 months following the workshop experience.



WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The synergy created in this workshop enables emerging and long term leaders to work collaboratively. The power and passion then enhances the performance of the HIV sector, addressing a concern of the decline of meaningful involvement in, and commitment to, the sector of PLHIV.

Leadership workshops such as PLDI are crucial in reinvigorating involvement in the sector and community more broadly. Therefore appropriate ongoing resourcing of peer based work by non-government organisations need to be embedded in their state and commonwealth funded programs.