



## Where to in 2022?

As we continue to rise to the challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic, the NSW government has eased restrictions and Pozhet is preparing the recommencement of its services.

The current pandemic has reshaped human experiences on what, how, and where people interact with each other. So to begin with, Pozhet would like to hear from you about your experiences and how we can engage with you in more meaningful ways. A brief client survey will be circulated shortly and activity planning will soon follow.

We understand HIV stigma and discrimination have a significant impact on people living with HIV. Check out our latest campaign debunking HIV myths released in 2021 [bit.ly/StigmavideoPZ](https://bit.ly/StigmavideoPZ)

Pozhet will continue our strong effort in this area of work and in fact, we are currently planning a new campaign. So watch this space!



### Where have Pozhet staff been?

**WOW – 2021 certainly threw its fair share of curveballs. Thank you for your patience during our absence for a big part of 2021 - we are grateful and hope you ended the year feeling stronger than ever.**

As you know, it has been an unpredictable, sometimes testing, but incredibly rewarding last few months as we all fulfilled redeployments to the NSW Health COVID response.

We wanted to share a snapshot of what this commitment entailed...

- Contact tracing
- Specialist Health Accommodation; supporting the Public Health Unit discharge those who had completed their hotel quarantine
- Offering logistical support at the Vaccination Hubs and Mobile Vaccination Clinics, including engaging community members in languages other than English
- We also helped those without Medicare get their immunisation statements.



### Annual Workshop recap

On 5 June 2021 a combined Positive Life and Pozhet Annual Workshop was held. The timing was great as there was a break in COVID-19 transmission which enabled us to hold this event.

People were excited to meet up on a face-to-face basis, catch up with old friends and meet new friends.

The Workshop was an opportunity for participants to share experiences in a safe, confidential and relaxed atmosphere. A popular session was the one about disclosure. It is a topic that is often discussed, particularly being asked whether you have HIV when visiting dentists and health services.

Participants also heard from a range of speakers on a variety of topics including treatments, financial planning, mindfulness and vaccine hesitancy.

Participants enjoyed the environment, views and wonderful food as well. Hopefully we will be able to have another workshop in 2022.

## Booster doses

Significant evidence over the last few months has demonstrated that booster doses of COVID-19 vaccines are effective in protecting against serious illness. In line with Australian Technical Advisory Group (ATAGI) recommendations, a booster vaccine can be given to everyone living in Australia aged 16 and over 3 months after the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

For severely immunocompromised people who have had 3 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, the ATAGI recommends the fourth dose of a COVID-19 vaccine 3 months after their third dose.

For further information, visit the NSW Health Boosters website

### When can I get the booster vaccine if I've tested positive to COVID-19?

As per NSW Health advice, you can get the booster vaccination once you have fully recovered from the virus. For most people, this is around 4-6 weeks after infection.

To book your vaccination appointment visit:  
[bit.ly/vaxBooking](https://bit.ly/vaxBooking) or Scan the QR Code



## Recovering from the pandemic



### Recovering from COVID-19

If you had COVID-19 this summer then you may know how difficult it can be returning to normal activities after being cleared from COVID-19 (minimum 7 days from your positive result). Whether you experienced mild or severe symptoms, it can take time to bounce back. Most people recover completely within a few weeks, however, everyone has a different experience in their recovery.

It is important to schedule regular appointments with your GP to discuss your symptoms and when you can return to normal activities, such as exercise.

Whilst exercise is an important part of bouncing back from COVID-19, remember to take it easy and listen to your body.

*If you develop severe symptoms such as severe shortness of breath or chest pain, call triple zero (000) immediately and tell the call handler and the paramedics on arrival if you have COVID-19.*

### Recovering from lockdown

As restrictions ease, it is time to start looking at a brighter future for 2022. Dust off those hiking shoes, ballet flats, or runners and let's get moving. Whether it is employment, relationships, education, or social activities, the pandemic has disrupted some of the most meaningful parts of our lives; it is time to reconnect and protect our mental health.

You can start by calling a friend or attending an upcoming community event.

All the best from the Pozhet team. Stay safe!

## Quiz

1. What is the only country whose name can be typed using the letters in just one row of a standard keyboard? (hint: the letters in the top row)
2. Who won the best album at the 2021 ARIA awards?  
Barkaa, Baker Boy, Genesis Owusu, The Avalanches
3. Which city was voted both most liveable by The Economist in June and best city to visit by Lonely Planet in October?  
Vienna, Melbourne, Osaka, Auckland
4. TRUE or FALSE: HIV notifications have declined by more than 35% in Australia since 2016?
5. How many telehealth appointments have there been since the start of the pandemic in Australia?  
64 million, 80 million, 86 million, 92 million
6. Pistil, stamen, peduncle, and stigma are all parts of what?
7. Since 2019, who has been Australia's governor-general?
8. Since 12 December 2021, ATAGI updated its recommendation for Pfizer and Moderna booster doses. How long after receiving your two-dose course of vaccination do you have to wait until receiving the booster dose?
9. Globally, what percentage of people living with HIV received lifelong antiretroviral therapy in 2020?  
47%, 65%, 73%, 89%
10. How many senators are there in the Australian Parliament?

# Infant feeding for women living with HIV in Australia

If you are living with HIV, and are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant, you may be starting to think about breastfeeding your baby, and whether it is safe or recommended.

A newly developed community resource has been launched by the National Association of People with HIV Australia (NAPWHA) and Positive Women Victoria, 'Breastfeeding for women living with HIV in Australia' – the first of its kind in Australia.

In a nutshell, the resource is for women living with HIV and provides information on the risks and benefits of breastfeeding and formula feeding. Formula feeding for parents living with HIV is still the safest and the most recommended option by health experts. However, breastfeeding with the care of a health care team can be a reasonable option for many parents living with HIV in Australia.



- To find out more, read the full resource 'Breastfeeding for women living with HIV in Australia' [bit.ly/WomenHIVBF](https://bit.ly/WomenHIVBF)
- These guidelines are based on The Optimal Scenario & Context of Care: Guidance for Healthcare Providers regarding infant feeding options for people living with HIV.' – ASHM Resource [bit.ly/ASHMbf](https://bit.ly/ASHMbf)

NAPWHA recognises that people who feed infants with human milk are diverse in terms of gender and sexuality. This includes trans men and transmasculine and nonbinary people for whom the language in this document will not be appropriate.

## Updates from partner services



**Positive Life NSW is staffed and run by people living with HIV offering a large range of social events, information sessions, workshops and support groups for all men and women living with HIV.**

We run two friendly, moderated online support groups for women living with HIV, a monthly **Social Club** over a meal in a private location 3 minutes from Sydney's Central Station, an inclusive social event called **[+Connect]** that welcomes all people living with HIV, our partners, family and friends in various venues across Sydney, and a safe, friendly and moderated online group via Zoom called **Positive Conversations** for everyone living with HIV.

To get invitations to our events, please subscribe here [bit.ly/SubscribePosLife](https://bit.ly/SubscribePosLife)

Positive Life NSW has men and women living with HIV ready to answer your questions and support your HIV journey. We accept referrals from people living with HIV, friends, family or via all allied health. For more details visit our website [www.positivelife.org.au](https://www.positivelife.org.au) or check our regularly updated online Events Calendar [www.positivelife.org.au/events-calendar](https://www.positivelife.org.au/events-calendar)

If you have any questions or want to talk about living with HIV in NSW, get in touch with a friendly peer living with HIV on (02) 9206 2177 or email [contact@positivelife.org.au](mailto:contact@positivelife.org.au)

### Bobby Goldsmith Foundation

**BGF has continued to deliver services and support to its clients since the COVID-19 pandemic started in early 2020. This includes supporting nearly 50 vulnerable people with HIV (PWHIV) on a daily basis in their homes throughout greater Sydney and in the Northern Rivers region.**

Case management and casework with complex clients has continued unaffected whilst frontline staff continue to work from home. This includes providing financial assistance for HIV medications, as well as providing practical and emotional support.

BGF's financial counselling service is available to all PWHIV throughout NSW and SA. Professionally accredited counsellors can assist with many varied financial concerns that clients can feel burdened with, including debt reduction, budgeting and advocacy.

Our Health and Wellbeing programs have continued online during COVID, with many clients enjoying the opportunity to meet for social engagement, growth, and development. Details of our extensive suite of programs on offer are on the BGF website [BGF.org.au](https://BGF.org.au) where an online enrolment form can be found.

As always, BGF welcomes expressions of interest from PWHIV and others to volunteer their services for the many community events that assist in raising funds to enable our activities to continue as we aim to ensure that all PWHIV can thrive.





## HIV Futures 10

A national survey of people living with HIV

[hivfutures.org.au](http://hivfutures.org.au)

## HIV Futures 10

HIV Futures 10 is a survey about the quality of life of people living with HIV in Australia.


This is a survey about the health, treatments, work, finances, sex, and relationships of people living with HIV; it is the most influential and important study of people living with HIV in Australia.

The study provides information to support advocacy, service provision, and policy to improve the lives of people living with HIV in Australia.

Please complete this survey if you are a person living with HIV in Australia and aged over 18 years.

HIV Futures 10 survey is open until May 2022.

To complete, [www.hivfutures.org.au](http://www.hivfutures.org.au)



## Did you hear?

A woman in New York, who received the stem cell transplant to treat leukaemia, is doing well, and both her cancer and HIV have been in remission for 14 months. While it is too soon to declare for certain that she is cured of HIV, experts are hopeful

## Did you know

**that 10 million people living with HIV are still not on antiretroviral therapy?**

Newly published research from the Netherlands has revealed the existence of a more transmissible and more damaging variant of HIV which has been circulating for years. People with this subtype experience double the rate of immune system decline and have higher viral loads. Although the subtype is responsive to antiretrovirals it reminds us that new variants are a possibility and HIV will not be eliminated until everyone with HIV is on treatment.

As the Deputy Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) stated:

*"We urgently need to deploy cutting-edge medical innovations in ways that reach the communities most in need. Whether it's HIV treatment or COVID-19 vaccines, inequalities in access are perpetuating pandemics in ways that harm us all", he said.*

## We want to hear from you!

We will be circulating a client survey in the coming weeks to get the low-down on what'd you like to see from Pozhet this year. We promise to do our best to bring your ideas to fruition.

Keep an eye on your mailbox and inbox – we're looking forward to hearing from you.

If you'd like to receive the newsletter to your email address, enter your details on the Pozhet website, [bit.ly/signupPZH](http://bit.ly/signupPZH) or email at us [pozhet@pozhet.org.au](mailto:pozhet@pozhet.org.au)



## Summer reading recommendations

- **The Happiest Man on Earth** by Eddie Jaku
- **The Way It Is Now** by Garry Disher
- **Bila Yarrudhanggalangdhuray: River of Dreams** by Anita Heiss

If you have any recommendations for movies, must-read books or binge-worthy TV series, email them to us for the next newsletter at [pozhet@pozhet.org.au](mailto:pozhet@pozhet.org.au)

## Answers to Quiz

1. Peru
2. Genesis Owusu
3. Auckland
4. TRUE. HIV notifications have declined by 37% in Australia since 2016 (AFAO, 2022).
5. 86 million
6. A flower
7. David Hurley
8. 3 months
9. 73% (WHO, 2021)
10. 76