Media Release

Date: 20 September 2015 **Contact**: Michael Scott info@@quac.org.au 3017 1777

QuAC Makes PEP and PrEP Available Through Clinic 30

The Queensland AIDS Council will make both HIV Pre Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and HIV Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) available through its sexual health service Clinic 30, in a significant move to stem rising rates of HIV within Queensland.

Clinic 30 is a comprehensive sexual and mental health service for the LGBTI community supported by qualified Doctors and one Psychologist, and is open five days a week. Two of the Clinic 30 doctors are S100 prescribers. Clinic 30 provides testing and treatment for all STIs.

PEP is a 28 day course of medication that can be taken within 72 hours of exposure to HIV to prevent HIV transmission. PrEP is medication that can be taken by people who are HIV negative to add to their risk reduction strategies to further reduce the risk of HIV transmission.

Because TGA approval is not in place for the supply of PrEP in Australia, some gay men and other men who have sex with men have been importing PrEP with a script via a GP. There is significant confusion about this process and Clinic 30 is in a position to assist with this process.

“With growing demand for PrEP across Australia, Queensland AIDS Council will make the process of importing PrEP simple for people who choose to be on PrEP. Reducing barriers to access is a significant way to increase uptake of PrEP within Queensland, and will undoubtedly lead to a reduction in new notifications of HIV,” said Michael Scott, Executive Director of Queensland AIDS Council.

“Our doctors have the ability to write a script for PrEP importation, have the ability to provide three monthly sexual health checks, and have the ability to monitor adherence. The decision to go on PrEP is an individual decision to be made, and it can be full of complex questions. Our doctors will make the process as streamlined as possible, and will be there to answer questions that arise on PEP or PrEP.”

“PrEP is a game changer for HIV and HIV prevention. It gives gay men and other men who have sex with men the ability to take control of their own sexual health, and to add to the growing range of risk reduction tools available.”

QuAC welcomes the upcoming PrEP trial of 150 participants in Queensland, but recognises that this is a “drop in the ocean” compared with the numbers demanding PrEP. We have a moral and ethical obligation to ensure that people who are not on a trial still have access to PrEP. QuAC estimates that “several thousand people” across Queensland would benefit from PrEP.

In addition to providing both PEP and PrEP, QuAC through its 2 Spirits Indigenous Program will address growing rates of STIs within Indigenous populations by encouraging Indigenous testing at Clinic 30. “It is incredibly worrying that rates of STIs remain high within Indigenous populations when compared with non Indigenous populations, and we need peer based and culturally adept programs to close this gap,” said Scott.

These announcements come at a significant time for Queensland with the focus being on Brisbane for the Australasian HIV and AIDS Conference this week, where PrEP and Indigenous health will be key issues discussed.

For further information contact Michael Scott, Executive Director, Queensland AIDS Council on 3017 1777 or info@quac.org.au.

ENDS

The Queensland AIDS Council was established in 1984 and is a community-based, not-for-profit, registered health promotion charity that works to improve the health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex Queenslanders, prevent HIV and build the capacity of the community.