

Sexual health and diversity enterprise

What is SHADE?

The Sexual Health and Diversity Enterprise (SHADE) aims to raise awareness of sexually transmissible infections (STIs) and blood borne viruses (BBVs) in young gay, lesbian, bisexual, intersex, transgender and queer (GLBTIQ) people. It aims to promote STI and BBV prevention and testing and support greater access to sexual health care in these communities.

It also aims to engage the wider community by encouraging public discussion and debate on sexual health issues relevant to young people. The campaign will span each month of February during 2010-12 and will include community grants, workforce development and a social marketing campaign involving resource distribution.

Why do we need SHADE?

Chlamydia notifications have increased considerably over 2007-08 in four of the five rural and regional Victorian areas, including Gippsland, Hume, Loddon Mallee and the Grampians. Syphilis and gonorrhoea notifications have also increased in the Loddon Mallee and Gippsland areas over the same period.

Data also shows that testing and notification rates for STIs are much lower in rural areas than in metropolitan regions, with rural areas also having poorer access to health and community support services.

Who does SHADE reach?

SHADE reaches a different part of regional and rural Victoria each year, allowing for the targeted communication of key messages and the tailoring of strategies to meet local community needs. Following the success of the 2010 SHADE campaign in Gippsland, 2011 is set to target the region of Hume.

What does the SHADE Community Grants Program involve?

The SHADE community grants program allows communities and organisations to develop activities which promote sexual health and diversity. Grants are made available for each year of the project to organisations and groups in the targeted SHADE region. Grants of up to \$1000 are available to fund small-scale activities, with additional grants of up to \$4000 available to fund large-scale youth events. Resources supplied by SHADE are available to support these activities and events.

What does the SHADE Workforce Development Program involve?

Workforce development training is provided to health care professionals in the SHADE region to raise awareness of diversity and improve the management of the health and social issues facing GLBTIQ youth. Participants work together to challenge misconceptions and develop communication skills which they can then apply to a broad range of situations.

What is Mind the Gap?

SHADE is part of Mind the Gap, a broad rural and regional community engagement program funded by the Department of Health. It focuses on the primary prevention of HIV and STIs among young GLBTIQ people and the engagement of their social networks. The primary partners collaborating on Mind the Gap are Family Planning Victoria, Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, Centre for Adolescent Health and Youth Empowerment Against HIV/AIDS.

How can I find more information?

For more information, go to www.fpv.org.au or contact Mind the Gap Project Officer David Mejia-Canales on 03 9257 0117 or at dmejia-canales@fpv.org.au