



**For Immediate Release**

Date: 17 November 2010

**\*\* PHOTO OPPORTUNITY \*\***

**WHEN:** Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2010, 11.15am

**WHERE:** Yarra Trams (Southbank Depot), 167 Normanby Road, Southbank, Melbourne

**WHAT:** Victorian AIDS Council/Gay Men's Health Centre (VAC/GMHC) President and cabaret performer 'Dolly Diamond' launch HIV awareness partnership with Yarra Trams, for World AIDS Day, with a giant red ribbon on the front of a tram.

Further details below.

**Commuters encouraged to 'Get the Facts' on HIV**

*Yarra Trams partners with the Victorian AIDS Council/Gay Men's Health Centre for World AIDS Day*

With AIDS Awareness Week taking place from 24 – 30 November, concluding with World AIDS Day on 1 December, Yarra Trams is helping to put HIV back on the public agenda.

As part of a community partnership with the Victorian AIDS Council/Gay Men's Health Centre (VAC/GMHC), Yarra Trams will display World AIDS Day posters on trams, with the aim of increasing commuter awareness of HIV.

VAC/GMHC Executive Director Mike Kennedy said: "The HIV epidemic no longer appears to be perceived as relevant to many Victorians. However, HIV still exists here in Australia, and there is currently no vaccine or cure. In the past year, two Victorians were newly diagnosed HIV positive every three days. This rate of new diagnoses, combined with the welcome fall in the death rate since the widespread uptake of HIV treatments, means there are now more people living with HIV in Victoria than ever before."

"This partnership is a fantastic opportunity for us to convey important information regarding HIV to the mainstream community and we are extremely grateful for the support of Yarra Trams", he said.

World AIDS Day is a global campaign, established by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to increase support for the millions of men, women and children living with HIV across the world; tackle issues such as stigma and discrimination, and commemorate the many lives lost since the epidemic began. It was established in 1988 and is now celebrated by over 190 countries, making it one of the world's most successful commemorative events.

Yarra Trams Marketing Manager Matt McDonnell said: "We are pleased to be able to assist in raising awareness of this important community health issue as part of our program of supporting Melbourne organisations and events."

VAC/GMHC's World AIDS Day campaign is also supported by Broadcasting Partner, JOY 94.9, who will be presenting a series of interviews and pre-recorded stories in the lead up to 1 December, and pharmaceutical company ViiV Healthcare, who have generously acted as Associate Sponsor.

To 'Get the facts' regarding HIV, and learn more about World AIDS Day please visit [www.vicaids.asn.au](http://www.vicaids.asn.au).

**ENDS**

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