

**STATEMENT**  
**12 March 2019**

## **Vale Chris Gratton**

AFAO Chief Executive Officer, Darryl O'Donnell:

The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations expresses its deepest sadness with the death of Chris Gratton.

Chris provided inspired leadership for the community-led HIV response at a critical time.

Chris was elected to the ACON Board for the year 1995/96 and remained on the ACON Board until November 2000. He was ACON's President from 1996 to 1998.

At the time Chris became ACON President, news was emerging that new combinations of HIV treatment were helping keep people well. From the height of Australia's HIV/AIDS epidemic just a few years earlier, many people with HIV were remaining alive and returning to health.

It was a period of continuing grief and emerging hope.

Chris led Sydney's gay community response to HIV at this most important time with intelligence and grace.

As a person, Chris was gentle, kind, extraordinarily intelligent and fun. As a community leader, he brought strength as gay men grappled with the profound impacts of the epidemic.

He was an unflinching champion of the communities of the epidemic, strongly committed to the rights of all. Under his leadership ACON reached out to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and set up its own peer led programs.

He was a good friend to AFAO's Board and staff. We extend our condolences to Chris' family and many friends and to our colleagues at ACON.

**For media comment, please contact: Nick Lucchinelli – 0422 229 032**

**Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations**

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The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) is the national federation for the HIV community response in Australia. AFAO works to end HIV transmission and reduce its impact on communities in Australia, Asia and the Pacific. AFAO's members are the AIDS Councils in each state and territory; the National Association of People with HIV Australia (NAPWA); the Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL); the Anwernekenhe National HIV Alliance (ANA); and Scarlet Alliance, Australian Sex Workers Association. AFAO's affiliate member organisations – spanning community, research, public health and clinical workforce – share AFAO's values and support the work we do.