

AIDS BEDS NOW!



P R O T E S T

NSW Health Minister John Hannaford refuses to take action on the critical shortage of AIDS beds in NSW hospitals. Meanwhile people with AIDS lie on trolleys in the hallways of casualty wards because there are not enough beds in the AIDS wards.

THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY . 1 PM
NSW HEALTH DEPT . MILLER ST . NORTH SYDNEY

ACT UP SYDNEY

AIDS COALITION TO UNLEASH POWER
FOR MORE INFORMATION PHONE 281 0362

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THE FACTS

* Up to 9 patients with AIDS lie on trolleys in St Vincent's Hospital Casualty Department EACH DAY, waiting for a hospital bed in the AIDS Ward. These patients, in need of acute specialist care, may often spend days lying on trolleys in hallways before a bed becomes available for them in the AIDS Ward. St Vincents Hospital refuses to place these patients with AIDS into vacant beds in other wards. This is a shameful disgrace!

* The NSW Minister for Health and Community Services, Mr John Hannaford, states that "only some AIDS patients live near St Vincent's Hospital". Actually, 40% of all people with HIV or AIDS in Australia live in inner city Sydney.

* Despite Hannaford's claim, ACT UP has not been consulted on where such beds should be allocated, nor were we informed that a decision on this matter would be made in February or March. March is too late. Those people with AIDS lying on trolleys in St Vincents Hospital Casualty Department needs beds NOW.

* If the Government policy is to provide AIDS beds close to where patients live, then clearly more beds are needed at St Vincent's Hospital. There has been no increase in the number of beds provided at St Vincent's for over 18 months, however the number of people admitted with AIDS continues to increase.

* While ACT UP Sydney supports an increase in the number of AIDS beds throughout metropolitan Sydney, such increases should be made in line with actual demand for service. That demand is greatest at St Vincent's. The situation at Prince Henry and Royal Prince Alfred hospitals is no better, often being filled to capacity.

* Despite attempts by ACT UP to meet with Mr Hannaford to discuss this matter, he has refused. It was only when he learnt of ACT UP's intended action outside his home two days prior to it occurring, that officers from his AIDS Bureau tried to meet with ACT UP in an attempt to stop the protest action from occurring.

* Mr Hannaford has been aware of the shameful AIDS beds crisis at St Vincent's for at least 12 months. So far he has done little more than give rhetorical promises to improve the situation.

ACT UP Sydney demands that Mr Hannaford gives an immediate guarantee in writing that:

* He will increase the number of beds in St Vincent's Hospital for people with AIDS immediately;

* He will ensure that should there be no beds available in designated AIDS wards at St Vincents, vacant beds in other wards will be made available for patients admitted with AIDS.

* He will take action to allocate immediately the additional funding as stated in his press release dated 24 January, to provide additional beds for patients with AIDS. These beds must be located in hospitals where the demand for AIDS beds is greatest, not according to empty theoretical statistics which are only a hollow attempt to justify his Departments "decentralisation" policies.

**ACT UP Sydney
ACTION = LIFE**