

Fact sheet

Source: 2007 AIDS epidemic update—regional summary

Oceania

Regional overview

- **Papua New Guinea** and **Australia** are the two countries in the region with a serious and growing HIV epidemic. Although other countries and territories report much smaller HIV prevalence, increasing numbers of sexually transmitted infections across the region among key populations at higher risk is of mounting concern.

Country data and trends

- New HIV infections in **Papua New Guinea** more than doubled from 2002 to 2006. Some 84% of all reported HIV infections to date have been in rural areas, where more than 80% of the country's nearly 6 million people live.
- The main mode of HIV transmission in **Papua New Guinea** appears to be unsafe heterosexual intercourse, although for most reported infections, information about the mode of transmission is missing.
- In **Papua New Guinea**, a high prevalence of untreated sexually transmitted infections is being detected in both the general population and groups at higher risk of exposure. Recent community-based studies found some 40% of people to be infected with at least one sexually transmitted infection.
- **Papua New Guinea** is making some progress in expanding voluntary counselling and testing sites—about 75 are operating country-wide—which has resulted in more people being tested for HIV; the number has tripled each since 2002. But AIDS remains the leading cause of hospital admissions and deaths. At Port Moresby General Hospital, up to 70% of beds are occupied by patients with HIV-related illnesses.
- **Australia's** epidemic continues to be transmitted mainly through high risk sexual behaviour among men who have sex with men, with almost two thirds (64%) of new HIV diagnoses between 2001 and 2005 occurring in that manner; this trend appears to stem partially from an increase in reports of unprotected sex with non-regular partners. Within the country's Indigenous population, women are at a greater risk of exposure to HIV. In one 2005 study, they were 18 times more likely to be HIV-positive than non-Indigenous women, and three times more likely than non-Indigenous men.
- Unsafe sex between men is the main factor for HIV transmission in **New Zealand**, although reports of HIV infection through unsafe heterosexual intercourse are on the rise.
- None of the other countries and territories in Oceania have reported more than 300 HIV cases since testing started. But risk factors associated with HIV outbreaks are prevalent in many; the small island states of **Fiji**, **Kiribati** and **Tonga** report condom use is extremely low in all population groups.

Contact:

Sophie Barton-Knott | UNAIDS Geneva | tel. +41 22 791 1697 | bartonknotts@unaids.org

Uniting the world against **AIDS**