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## **IT'S QUEER EYE FOR THE GRIM GUY**

21 years after the infamous Grim Reaper AIDS prevention campaign, the brutal ten pin bowler has been given a much-needed makeover - meet the Glam Reaper!

The new HIV prevention campaign is an initiative of ACON, the leading health promotion agency for NSW's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. ACON also provides information and support for people with HIV or at risk of acquiring HIV, including sex workers and people who use drugs.

With a tagline of "HIV Remains With Us", the new campaign reinvents the original Grim Reaper concept with a more contemporary approach to HIV prevention. To see the original Australian Government advertisement released in 1987 click here <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IaQjL8A5Igw&feature=related>

ACON CEO Stevie Clayton says while the original campaign had a profound impact on creating awareness of HIV, it also came out at a time when we knew little about HIV and when there was great fear about HIV, leading to the demonisation of gay men and stigmatisation of people with HIV.

"HIV campaigns have evolved significantly since then as has our understanding of HIV and the communities affected by HIV," she says. "We now know that gay men and people with HIV are not the problem – they are part of the solution.

"This new campaign uses humour to help people understand that while our knowledge of and attitudes towards HIV have come along way, some things have stayed the same. Basically, in 1987, condoms and lube were the best way to prevent HIV transmission. Over 20 years later, condoms and lube are still the best way to prevent HIV transmission."

The foundation of the campaign is a 1min 42 sec video that features Sydney drag identity Mitzi MacIntosh as the Glam Reaper. Various community members from specific social groups and sub-cultures feature as the 'ten pins' who prevent themselves from getting bowled over by embracing the safe sex message.

Written by Michael Idato, produced by Andrew Worboys and featuring narration by the original Grim Reaper voiceover artist John Stanton, the video was released on the internet over nine months ago as part of the campaign's online viral marketing phase.

Stage two of the campaign launches this week and will include the placement of advertisements in local GLBT media and on gay web sites over the next two months. Posters will also be distributed throughout local sex-on-premises venues, licensed venues, selected nightclubs, gyms and at community events. Posters and resources will also be made available to sexual health centres, cafés and other private businesses. The video

also screened before every session at Queerscreen's recent Queerdoc festival (Sydney's queer documentary film festival).

Ms Clayton says the project has been a real community effort with lots of people contributing their time and expertise for free. "We thank everyone involved for the great work they've done and for helping to build our community's health and wellbeing."

The new campaign video can be viewed on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=euONaj-EnmA>

and MySpace: <http://www.myspace.com/theglamreaper>

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