

Hope for the world

The Melbourne-based Catholic AIDS-Care Agency, The Australian AIDS Fund Inc. has produced the world's first "cause" rose for HIV/AIDS.

Carrying the name Hope and now listed on the International Registry of Roses, Hope was launched onto the world stage by South Australian Premier, John Olsen at the Adelaide International Rose Festival.

The President of The Australian AIDS Fund (an Agency member of Melbourne's Catholic Social Services) Brian Haill said Hope had been produced as a fund-raiser for the world's positive people. It will go on to the Australian market around June 2001 and its face will also be seen in the United States, Europe and Asia.

On 30 November, the eve of World AIDS Day, a Hope rose bush was flown to Canberra and featured in a special presentation to the National Academies Forum - "Every 8 Seconds: AIDS Revisited" held at the National Library and attended by some of Australia's most prominent figures engaged in the HIV/AIDS field. Archbishop George Pell was among the speakers.

The National Academies Forum is the collaborative body of Australia's four learned Academies - the Australian Academy of the Humanities, the Academy of Social Science and the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering. It fosters debate and policy development in such areas as research, heritage, the environment, technology and education.

With HIV now infecting new victims at the rate of more than one every 8 seconds, the Forum sought to dispel Australian complacency about HIV infection and discussed the causes and reasons for the swiftly spreading global pandemic.

On World AIDS Day itself another Hope rose plant was taken to a number of remembrance ceremonies, a visit to the Sacred Heart Hospice and an Ecumenical Service in St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney.



The Hope Rose

In Melbourne, another Hope rose was symbolically planted in the grounds of Fairfield House, the new Continuing Care Unit for positive people at the Alfred Hospital. This planting provided an opportunity to involve children, with the focus on women and children touched by the disease and was hosted by the Positive Women organisation.

Adelaide's Archbishop Leonard Faulkner was accompanied by a number of representatives from the Adelaide Diocesan AIDS Council and other care agencies as he planted a Hope rose in the gardens of the St Francis Xavier Cathedral. The Hope roses are presently being

grown in South Australia, but that State's fierce heat killed the blooms that had been intended to accompany the rose bushes.

However, readers of *Kairos* can view the beauty of the rose for themselves by visiting the website of The Australian AIDS Fund at www.aids.org.au.

The Hope rose is an ideal cut flower offering large, double blooms with a blush to ivory centre. Its price will be determined before it comes onto the market around June next year.

The Australian AIDS Fund cares for men, women and children at its two supportive accommodation facilities in Melbourne - San Michel and Rosehaven (Australia's first such facility for women and children) and provides Victoria's only respite camps - Camp Seaside - for families affected or infected by HIV/AIDS. It has been engaged in this work for over 14 years and, is desperately seeking increased and meaningful State Government funding to add to its own funding initiatives, claiming the present allocations are grossly inappropriate.