



**National
Academies**
F • O • R • U • M

Public symposium on
Every eight seconds: AIDS revisited

29-30 November 2000
National Library of Australia, Canberra

Remarks by Professor Malcolm Gillies

Towards the end of the Second World War, at a time of immense human loss, the precious prize of peace was held up and projected in the birth of the Peace Rose, now probably the most famous rose in the world.

We, here today, together, are very much engaged against the world-savaging war of HIV/AIDS. Just last month, at the International Rose Festival in Adelaide, the South Australian Premier, John Olsen, launched the world's first 'cause' rose for HIV/AIDS. It carries the wonderful name of Hope -our hope for a vaccine in this new millennium. Eventually, in stature, it could become a sister to the Peace Rose. Its production was commissioned by the Melbourne charity, the Australian AIDS Fund Incorporated, which came into being as a response to the appalling discrimination meted out against New South Wales pre-schooler, Eve van Grafhorst, the first Australian child to be HIV-infected via a blood transfusion. Her story, and that of the Australian AIDS Fund, are on the website www.aids.org.au.

On this eve of World AIDS Day, I have been invited especially to share Hope with all of you -the Australian-produced Hope Rose. Our guest with those first precious blooms is Kerrie Hadfield from Queanbeyan. Kerrie was herself suffering from a life-threatening medical condition when, as a 10-year-old in the then Prince of Wales Children's Hospital (now the Sydney Children's Hospital), she met Eve van Grafhorst, another young AIDS hero of that time, Troy Lovegrove, and other HIV-infected children in Ward C5, the AIDS ward. These meetings left an indelible mark on Kerrie's life and inspired her support for HIV-positive people.

We are pleased that Kerrie is here to present the Hope Rose on behalf of the Australian AIDS Fund.

Presentation of the Hope Rose Professor Malcolm Gillies and Kerrie Hadfield



Kerrie Hadfield presents the Hope Rose to Professor Malcolm Gillies, President of the National Academies Forum, at the Symposium on *Every eight seconds: AIDS revisited*.

Presentation of Hope Rose by Kerrie Hadfield

I am very honoured and also very proud to share your company today and to bring you this very special rose, which I hope can find a home here in the grounds of the National Library of Australia.

What a joy it is to be open and hopeful, compared to those early days of the mid-eighties, when ignorance and fear of people with HIV was more prevalent than the disease itself. During my many hospital stays, we staged regular water fights on the wards. The plastic syringes, drop bags and tubes made great bombs and water pistols for our battles. I still remember that day in 1987, when we were suddenly banned from touching these things, and watched as the nurses put them into huge yellow plastic bags which were later burnt. In many places in Australia today, these fears are still not far from the surface, and even some doctors are not fully educated on the virus.

At the moment, the Hope Rose is still very much an infant. We are hoping that there will be enough cut blooms to show up in World AIDS Day celebrations in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, but it will be out in strength next year -as a fund- raiser for all HIV-positive people -not just in Australia, but throughout the world.

I stand before you today with the spirits of my beautiful HIV friends by my side. Troy, Adam, Skye, Blake and Eve are not here to share with you their love and inspiration that they were to my life, but their message is like that of this rose which carries hope within its beautiful petals -the hope that this world will see an end to AIDS. Please keep it with you always.