



Bobby Goldsmith  
Foundation

**Immediate release**  
**10 February 2025**

## ***Bobby Goldsmith Foundation mourns the loss of HIV advocate and BGF ambassador, David Polson AM.***

Bobby Goldsmith Foundation (BGF) is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of David Polson AM. A giant in our sector, David was a tireless advocate and inspiration to so many in the HIV community and beyond. He leaves behind an immeasurable legacy, one dedicated to ending HIV stigma and advancing medical research in the HIV field.

David was one of the first people in Australia to be diagnosed with HIV. Despite the fear and uncertainty of those early days, he turned his personal story into one driven for purpose and change. His dedication saw participation in 28 HIV drug trials – arguably, more than any one individual living with HIV. These gruelling trials left David with life-long medical conditions, but his contribution to research paved the way for the development of new treatments, including the highly effective *triple therapy*, now used world-wide.

For more than 28 years, David used his voice to advocate, educate and inspire people. He fought hard against HIV stigma, whether through public speaking, media appearances, community work or in his role as an ambassador with BGF. He was determined that no one face HIV alone and in recognition of his profound work, he was honoured and celebrated as an HIV Community Champion by the National Association of People with HIV Australia in 2021.

Nick Lawson, CEO of BGF paid tribute to David’s extraordinary life and contributions.

“David was a giant in the HIV community – his bravery, his advocacy and his generosity in sharing his story have changed countless lives. He was not just a survivor but a trailblazer. His loss is deeply felt here at BGF and in the wider community but his legacy has forever shaped the future of HIV.

On a personal note, one of the most enduring memories I will always have of David, is of his smile when he was delighted by something, and there were many things that delighted him. His eyes would pop slightly and his grin would widen, so gleefully. That’s how I remember him living life – with glee.”

Professor Carla Treloar AM, President of the BGF Board also reflected on David’s long-standing connection with the foundation.

“David embodied the very spirit of resilience and hope that BGF stands for. His tireless work in challenging HIV stigma and supporting others has left an indelible mark on our community. We



Bobby Goldsmith  

---

Foundation

will forever be grateful for his passion, wisdom and the light he brought so many lives. He will be deeply missed.”

David Polson’s life was a testament to the power of advocacy, the strength of the human spirit and the power of community. His passing is a profound loss. BGF extends our deepest sympathies to those who loved David and who had the privilege of knowing him.



## Bobby Goldsmith Foundation

---

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Supporting people living with HIV has never been more important. Whilst transmission rates have dropped significantly, HIV is not over for the almost 30, 000 people living with HIV in Australia. Many of the people who BGF support are Long-Term Survivors, the first generation to age with HIV and have complex health and social needs. Now more than ever, they need our support.

### **ABOUT BGF:**

Bobby Goldsmith was one of the first Australians to die from an AIDS-related illness in June 1984. His friends came together to find a way of giving him the care he needed to remain at home so they could make his last weeks as comfortable as possible. He died with dignity, at home, where he wanted to be.

His friends established the important precedent of providing support and services for people living with HIV. If direct support could be provided for one person, it could be done for many.

We are the legacy of that dedicated group of friends.

Bobby Goldsmith Foundation has been supporting people living with HIV for 40 years. Founded in 1984, we provide practical, emotional and financial support to people living with HIV in New South Wales and South Australia.

We are unique as the only not-for-profit in Australia providing frontline services and support to people living with HIV.

In 2024 however, we expanded our service offering to provide disability services to all people, especially those living with HIV, the broader LGBTQIA+ community and to all people seeking progressive, supportive care.

BGF is a registered not-for-profit with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission and has no political or religious affiliations, just a commitment to help and support people to live well on their own terms through practical, tailored care.

### **For interviews and further information:**

Rhys Leppard  
Head of Marketing, Communications and Branding  
Email: [rhys.leppard@bgf.org.au](mailto:rhys.leppard@bgf.org.au)  
Phone: 0434 726 519