

Listening First – Fiji’s Community-Led Response to Rising HIV Cases

As HIV cases rise sharply across Fiji, a small network of grassroots, community and nongovernmental organisations is on the frontline of the response. Supported by the regional Pacific Sexual and Gender Diversity Network, these groups were established and trusted by and for the people most affected by HIV in Fiji. Their reach into the communities most at risk is something no outside organisation can replicate.

When Fiji declared an HIV outbreak in early 2025, Health Equity Matters built on existing partnerships and stepped up its collaboration with four of them – Rainbow Pride Foundation, Strumphet Alliance, Fiji Network Plus and the Survival Advocacy Network – helping them meet the moment on their own terms. Rather than importing a model from outside, the work began by listening and then strengthening the foundations a credible organisation needs: sound governance, financial management, safeguarding and formal registration. Each plan was built around the group’s own priorities and ways of working.

That partnership is now shaping a successful community-led response. In just five months, between December 2025 and April 2026, peer-led outreach reached more than 7,000 people across Fiji. With investment from the Australian Government, it has brought together a more unified HIV prevention and outreach model. Community-led organisations now have a stronger voice in how Fiji’s national response is run and can ensure that the people delivering frontline care also help decide its direction.

‘For many years, community organisations have carried the weight of HIV prevention. It is encouraging to see the Government now working in genuine partnership with us to strengthen a community-led response. With support from Health Equity Matters, we can finally build on our experience in a sustainable way. The new outreach model gives us real hope for the future.’

— Asaeli Sinusetaki, Interim CEO of the Rainbow Pride Foundation and Co-Lead of the HIV Taskforce Prevention Sub-Committee

This is community leadership in the truest sense: the people closest to the crisis shaping the response to it, with the backing to make it last.

With continued investment, these organisations can put paid staff behind work that often rests on one person, carry peer outreach and counselling into the communities hardest to reach and bring more grassroots groups into the response. That is how Fiji's community-led answer to the outbreak becomes a lasting one.