

**Thorne Harbour Health calls for communities to stop having casual sex during COVID-19**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Thursday 26 MARCH 2020* - For the first time in its four-decade history, Thorne Harbour Health is calling on communities to stop having casual sex in the face of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Thorne Harbour Health, formerly the Victorian AIDS Council, is calling on LGBTI communities and people living with HIV to limit their risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Thorne Harbour Health CEO Simon Ruth said, "We're faced by an unprecedented global health crisis. While COVID-19 is not a sexually transmitted infection, the close personal contact we have when during sex poses a serious risk of COVID-19 transmission. We need people to stop having casual sex at this stage."

"But after four decades of sexual health promotion, we know abstinence isn't a realistic strategy for most people. We need to look at ways we can minimise risk while maintaining a healthy sex life."

Last week, the organisation released a resource with strategies to minimise the risk of COVID-19 while having sex. Strategies included utilising sex tech, solo sexuality, and limiting your sexual activity to an exclusive sexual partner, commonly known as a 'f\*ck buddy'.

"You can reduce your risk by making your sexual network smaller. If you have a regular sexual partner, have a conversation about the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Provided both of you are limiting your risk by working from home and exercising physical distancing from others, you can greatly reduce your chance of COVID-19 transmission," said Simon Ruth.

The organisation's stance is not dissimilar from advice from the UK government. Earlier this week, chief medical officer Dr Jenny Harries advised couples not cohabitating to consider testing their relationship by moving in together during the country's lockdown.

Thorne Harbour Health CEO Simon Ruth released a video message today addressing sex & COVID-19 following last week's message about physical distancing.

Both videos as well as the 'Sex, Intimacy & Coronavirus' info sheet can be found on the Thorne Harbour website at: [thorneharbour.org/covid19](https://thorneharbour.org/covid19)

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