

Media Release

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ECU academic awarded \$100,000 to bring international AIDS conference to Perth

Dr Trevor Cullen, Head of Journalism at Edith Cowan University (ECU) has been awarded \$100,000 to bring the 11th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific to Perth in 2013.

The event will attract an estimated 3,500 delegates and inject more than \$9.38 million into the State's economy.

The award, from the Perth Convention Bureau (PCB) and the State Government, recognises Dr Cullen's long commitment and research record to promote AIDS awareness, especially among media academics and professionals.

Dr Cullen, who is a leading authority on media coverage of HIV, plans to use part of the award to lobby various international health organisations to support the bid to bring an international AIDS conference to Perth.

The majority of the funding is earmarked for conference preparations.

The International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific is held biannually to bring people from various backgrounds to share knowledge, skills, ideas and research findings related to HIV and AIDS.

Dr Cullen's doctoral thesis (University of Queensland, 2000) was focused on media coverage of HIV and since then, he has coordinated workshops for editors and journalists on reporting HIV/AIDS in Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Micronesia, Australia and presented research papers at international media and health conferences in Malaysia, China, Fiji, Egypt, Philippines, New Zealand, Mexico, Singapore and Australia.

Dr Cullen says the conference is a fantastic opportunity to promote greater awareness about HIV in Asia and Australia.

"We must not forget that the disease is still a serious health problem in many countries and especially in several countries that surround Australia," he said.

"Viruses like avian and swine flu come and go but HIV has been around for nearly 30 years.

"Currently 33 million people live with HIV and 25 million have died from it – we can't afford to take our focus off it."

ECU Vice-Chancellor Professor Kerry Cox commended Dr Cullen for his work in bringing the conference to Perth.

"This is just one of many valuable contributions that Dr Cullen has made in the important fight against HIV and AIDS," he said.

Dr Trevor Cullen is Head of the Journalism program at ECU's School of Communications and Arts based at the Mount Lawley Campus.

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