

HEALTH

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SEEKING WAYS TO HELP MANAGE
THE IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS ON A
BROADER SCALE

HIV/AIDS is a significant issue for our businesses in South Africa and Mozambique. The Company for many years has promoted a proactive environment in our workplaces with respect to management of the disease. This has included conducting education programs, ensuring employees and dependants have appropriate access to medical care, and reducing hostel-type accommodation for employees, which is known to be a risk factor for the disease. We have also made significant inroads in terms of supporting community facilities that assist in managing the disease and its consequences. We are now seeking ways to support initiatives that will help manage the disease in the wider population.

In the communities where our operations are located in South Africa and Mozambique, the incidence of HIV/AIDS is among the highest in the world. We have a responsibility to manage the impact of the disease in order to care for our employees, protect the viability of our operations and support the well-being and development of our host communities.

In managing the disease within our workforce, there has been a strong emphasis on prevention through on-site education. This has included promoting healthy lifestyles and supporting awareness programs, including industrial theatre presentations in which the issues are conveyed in a manner that overcomes many of the language and cultural barriers.

As our worksites do not have medical facilities for providing extensive medical care, our approach to ensuring employees and dependants have appropriate access to medical care is to provide universal health insurance to all our employees in South Africa and Mozambique. This insurance has the capacity to provide the necessary treatment for all phases of HIV-related illness. In association with this initiative, many of our operations are developing links with external providers who will ensure that those registered for HIV management with their health insurer receive timely coordinated care, optimising the benefits available through the insurance scheme.



► Caring for HIV/AIDS patients is a major issue

A large number of our operations, in collaboration with trade unions, have performed anonymous saliva-based workforce screening to determine the level of HIV existent throughout the workforce. The results in general have shown that our directly employed workforce has an HIV prevalence that is lower than that in the surrounding community, and this has stabilised over recent years. However, our contractor workforce has shown an HIV rate that is significantly higher and more reflective of that in the local community.

Seeking effective new treatment methods

While much has been done within the BHP Billiton network to assist in managing the HIV/AIDS issue in our workforce and surrounding community, we believe that as a global organisation we can support initiatives to confront this disease more widely. As a consequence, we have been working with a selected health organisation in seeking opportunities to develop treatment methods that will extend the influence of our efforts beyond our employees, their families and communities and into the broader populations that have been affected by this disease.

We have recently initiated discussions with the selected health organisation in an attempt to collaborate in a significant research project to further advance HIV/AIDS treatment.