

PHILLIP ADAMS BALLETLAB

The Age
Media House - Level 2, 655 Collins Street, Docklands VIC 3008

24 July 2014

Letters editor,

Chloe Smethhurst's review of Phillip Adams BalletLab's community work '*LIVE WITH IT we all have HIV*', (The Age, 20 July, 2014) shows a level of disregard and ignorance that cannot go unaddressed.

While we welcome independent review, we are deeply concerned with accusations around exploitation of our participants. This accusation is emotionally and professionally damaging to the participants, constructs them as exploited, and by inference questions their judgment.

We also reject in its entirety the implication that community engagement is an ineffectual response to the ongoing HIV crisis. Moreover, we object strongly to the nihilistic statement: "HIV is not going away" which directly subverts the excellent work being done globally on HIV prevention and research.

Ms Smethhurst should stick to commenting on artistic merit, rather than questioning the judgement of the brave and extraordinary people who participated in the work, and making ill informed judgements about Phillip Adams BalletLab's ethics and professionalism.

Sincerely,



Gary Anderson
Chair
Phillip Adams BalletLab



John Hall
Partnership Program Leader
Victorian AIDS Council