

Victoria's new HIV Strategy emphasises the importance of a community-led response

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

28 JUNE 2017 - The Victorian AIDS Council (VAC) welcomes the Andrews Government's announcement of Victoria's HIV strategy for 2017-2020 - setting the bar higher as we approach the global targets of 90-90-90 in HIV diagnosis, treatment, and viral suppression and recognising the importance of the community-controlled response in reaching those goals.

Announced this morning by Minister for Health, the Hon Jill Hennessy, the plan aims to renew and reaffirm Victoria's commitment to the vital elimination of new HIV transmissions by 2020 by working closely with those communities most affected.

"We applaud the Government on their dedication to working with the community-controlled organisations in the ongoing response to HIV in Victoria," said VAC CEO Simon Ruth. "This plan recognises that HIV affects a broad range of people, including women and members of the trans and gender diverse community, as well as acknowledges that HIV continues to disproportionately affect gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men."

"As the Government affirms that 'in Victoria, equality is not negotiable', we want to ensure this disparity in health outcomes is addressed."

The strategy also recognises the important role HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) will continue to play in HIV prevention. The PrEP-X study in Victoria now has 3,800 people enrolled and expects to reduce new HIV infections by 30 percent.

"Victoria's rapid enrolment rates in PrEP-X have demonstrated that the community is serious about taking control of their sexual health and wellbeing and accessing this game-changing tool in HIV prevention," said Ruth.

"Our plan forward will need to be a comprehensive one ensuring HIV testing is accessible and affordable to everyone and that we respond to the needs of people living with HIV - in particular, those aging with HIV."

ENDS

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