

MEDIA RELEASE

Staying the course: Budget extends commitment to HIV response

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Tuesday's Federal Budget continues Australia's robust HIV prevention and treatment efforts, demonstrating enduring commitment to the virtual elimination of transmission, Health Equity Matters and the National Association of People with HIV Australia said.

The Budget papers confirm:

- An investment of \$52 million over four years to ensure the highly effective HIV prevention intervention HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is affordable to everyone in Australia.
- \$42.5 million over three years (2026/27 - 2028/29) to continue investment in a scheme to deliver HIV treatment to all people in Australia with HIV.

"You cannot end HIV transmission while a significant number of people in Australia cannot afford the medicines that prevent and treat it," Adjunct Associate Professor Mark Orr AM, President of Health Equity Matters said. "Tonight's Budget keeps that door open."

NAPWHA President Scott Harlum said enduring access to affordable medicine was central to Australia's response.

"People with HIV on effective treatment cannot pass on the virus. Yet until recently, Medicare-ineligible people could not access life-saving HIV medicines that cost other Australians a few dollars on the PBS. This Budget ensures those medicines are affordable for all that need them, which will minimise HIV transmission and take us closer to virtual elimination of HIV transmission in Australia."

Health Equity Matters and NAPWHA separately acknowledge the three year investment of \$41.7 by the Albanese government to extend community-led programs that are implementing the recommendations of the National HIV Taskforce, chaired by the Health Minister, Hon Mark Butler MP. This included funding to extend programs to increase the supply of HIV self-test devices across Australia, health promotion and education to the community and clinical workforces and the extension of a national HIV multicultural peer navigation program. Additionally, \$14.1 million in funding was allocated to continue investment in the national HIV peak bodies, providing the multi-year certainty community organisations need to focus on the business planning and program delivery needed to achieve the 2030 elimination goal.

"Peak body funding is the engine room of Australia's HIV response," Adjunct Associate Professor Orr said. "Peak bodies coordinate programming that allows the community sector to do the partnership work with government, researchers and clinicians that has made Australia a world leader on HIV for four decades. The Albanese Government's sustained investment in community-led HIV programming backs that model to keep going."

"With tonight's Budget, the 2030 goal of virtual elimination of HIV transmission in Australia is genuinely within reach," Orr said.

Health Equity Matters and NAPWHA also recognised the government's recent commitments of \$48 million for Pacific HIV responses and \$266 million over three years to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

"Australia's commitment to the Global Fund sends a signal to the world that we are fully committed to supporting the ongoing delivery of programming in developing countries to address global health threats like HIV. This is on top of \$48 million for Pacific HIV responses announced in November last year. In sum, this investment demonstrates the Albanese Government's commitment to protecting Australia's health security and the health of the family of Pacific Island Countries we belong to," Adjunct Associate Professor Orr said.

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