

Health Equity Matters Strategic Plan

2025–2030

President's Message

Australia's HIV response has delivered a steady reduction in HIV notifications since 2013, and we now have one of the fastest-declining rates of transmission in the world.

This remarkable progress has created a clear and achievable pathway towards virtual elimination of the virus – after 40 years of dedicated effort, our goal is within reach.

Realising this ambitious vision for all of our communities, and maintaining this achievement, will require ongoing effort and focus from affected communities, peak bodies, clinicians and researchers, backed up by multi-partisan political support and sustained investment from all levels of government.

Our success will depend on sustaining the community-led approach that has defined Australia's HIV response. We deeply value the leadership and vital services provided by our members. It is our members who were created by and for people with HIV, LGBTIQ+ communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, sex workers and people who use drugs. Their continuing leadership is fundamental to this Strategic Plan.

Working with our partners that span research and clinical networks, we will lead a strong, unified agenda to end HIV transmission in Australia by

2030, ensuring no one is left behind, regardless of birthplace, immigration status or place of residence. We will prioritise the actions in the National HIV Taskforce Report and the ninth National HIV Strategy 2024–2030. These priorities include expanding testing options, widening the supply of PrEP and securing fast approval of new technologies to guarantee universal access to prevention, testing and treatment. In partnership with organisations such as NAPWHA, we will push for legislative reforms to tackle stigma and discrimination while improving the health and wellbeing of people with HIV.

Supporting our state and territory member organisations is central to improving the health of LGBTIQ+ communities nationwide. The launch of Australia's first National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People 2025–2035 is an opportunity to work with the federal government to improve the health of LGBTIQ+ communities. Our leadership will aim to coordinate opportunities for our state and federal members to adapt to community needs. We will work with the federal government and mainstream health providers

to ensure that LGBTIQ+ people, including First Nations LGBTIQ+ people, are included and have a say in policies and programs that affect them; and strive to secure new funding and investment to deliver these programs.

Our commitment to equity and inclusion extends beyond Australia's borders, driving our efforts to address the HIV crisis in the Indo-Pacific. Our work in the region will promote diversified and evidence-based HIV responses. We will continue to deliver programs funded by the Australian government and multi-lateral donors like the Global Fund, strengthen relationships with these organisations and work closely with community-led networks to support local responses.

Achieving our vision will only be possible with an engaged, high-performing workforce. We will continue to strengthen our leadership and improve organisational systems and workplace culture to focus on outcomes and delivery. By cultivating a supportive, values-driven culture and upholding high performance, we will continue to serve our communities effectively and remain a trusted partner for government and donors.

Australia is uniquely positioned to become the first country in the world to achieve the virtual elimination of HIV transmission. This Strategic Plan, developed in collaboration with our Board, staff and members, outlines our priorities and a roadmap through to 2030. It will steer us as we take the final steps necessary towards achieving the virtual elimination of HIV transmission, and guide the evolution of the HIV response to meet the changing needs of priority populations.

Together, we can create a world without HIV transmission and ensure that all members of our communities can lead full, healthy lives. Join us on that journey.

Mark Orr AM

President

Health Equity Matters



Our Vision

An end to HIV transmission and a full, healthy life for our communities in Australia and across the Indo-Pacific.

We support our members in fully realising their ambitions for communities.



Our Values



Community

We are accountable to the communities we are part of, work with, represent and serve. Importantly, we recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Australians and respect communities' traditions, views and ways of life.



Collaboration

We treat stakeholders with respect, understanding and consideration as part of our belief in the power of working together to foster strong partnerships to achieve common goals.



Leadership

We are honest and transparent and lead with integrity and vision.



Human rights

We promote the human rights of all communities and the removal of social and cultural barriers that restrain equitable access to justice and healthcare.



Diversity

We respect the dignity of all people and celebrate diversity in all its forms.



Self-Determination

We value individual thinking and support our communities in making choices and shaping their futures.



Performance Oriented

We are resourceful, resilient and goal driven in the pursuit of our vision.

Our Members

Health Equity Matters' members are national, state, and territory organisations created by communities most affected by HIV. Our members are deeply embedded within these communities. Our national members recognise the rich lived experience of their communities on HIV and more broadly. Our state and territory members have evolved to meet HIV goals by addressing intersecting health issues that increase HIV risk. These organisations deliver a range of healthcare programs on HIV and LGBTIQ+ health. Together we constitute a federation that provides a trusted and credible voice to governments and delivers peer education, support and services on HIV, LGBTIQ+ health and justice issues.

This federation includes state and territory members built by LGBTIQ+ communities and national organisations of people with HIV, sex workers, people who use drugs, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. As a national voice for HIV communities, the organisation pro-actively promotes the delivery of targeted and sustainable community-controlled primary healthcare to LGBTIQ+ communities across Australia.

Our national members are the peak national organisations representing key populations in Australia's community response to HIV.



Our state and territory members are Australia's leading HIV and LGBTIQ+ organisations.



Health Equity Matters' affiliate member organisations span community, research and clinical workforces. They share our values and support the work we do.



Ending HIV transmission and improving the lives of people with HIV

Australia has made remarkable progress in responding to HIV, leading the world in its drive to virtually eliminate HIV transmission by 2030. To achieve this ambitious goal, continued focus and investment is essential. We work closely with government, research, and clinical partners to drive and monitor progress, ensuring sustained momentum towards our goal.

The National HIV Taskforce Report, launched in November 2023, demonstrates a pathway to achieving virtual elimination. The release of the Ninth National HIV Strategy, which ensures political commitment by all governments, will help maintain momentum across all facets of the HIV response.

A National Consensus Statement developed by Health Equity Matters and the National Association of People with HIV Australia (NAPWHA) in consultation with over 100 experts outlines the priorities for sustaining and surpassing our targets. It emphasises the importance of advocating for rapid access to new technologies and making access to proven biomedical prevention easier for everyone.

We will continue to build on our achievements while safeguarding successes among sex workers and people who inject drugs through ongoing engagement with Scarlet Alliance and AIVL. This strategy ensures no one is left behind in the journey to end HIV transmission in Australia. This requires a nuanced and bespoke response to deal with priority subgroups of gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM), such as overseas-born men, men living in suburban, outer urban, and rural areas, other migrants from high-prevalence settings and young people under 25. There continues to be a focus on reducing undiagnosed HIV and late diagnoses by providing new and innovative HIV testing technologies and new models of testing, such as opt-out HIV testing. This also requires targeted interventions for people born in high-prevalence countries and heterosexual people, who are over-represented in late diagnosis data.

Health Equity Matters works closely with NAPWHA, the voice of people with HIV in Australia, to reduce barriers to treatment, address stigma and discrimination and support efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of people living with HIV including migrants and asylum

seekers with HIV. We also work closely with our partners at ASHM to ensure collaboration with clinicians to achieve our shared goals.

Health Equity Matters is dedicated to addressing the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by partnering with the Anwernekenhe National HIV Alliance, the Positive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Network, and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO).

Together, we can ensure Australia meets its goals and demonstrates to the world the virtual elimination of HIV transmission is achievable.

Priorities

- 1.1 Establish a robust, shared agenda for ending HIV transmission in Australia by 2030.
- 1.2 Ensure that no population group is left behind, including among subgroups of GBMSM such as overseas-born, recently arrived immigrants, and men living in suburban, outer urban and rural areas.
- 1.3 Promote strategies to reduce undiagnosed HIV and late diagnoses by expanding testing options and implementing approaches such as opt-out HIV testing.
- 1.4 Foster strong partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their organisations.
- 1.5 Foster strong partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse community networks and organisations.
- 1.6 Advocate for timely approval of new technologies and ensure universal access to proven HIV prevention, testing, and treatment technologies.
- 1.7 In partnership with NAPWHA, advocate to support the health and wellbeing of people with HIV and to combat stigma and discrimination associated with HIV through reforms to criminal and migration laws.

Improve the health of LGBTIQ+ communities by supporting our state and territory members to develop and deliver sustainable and targeted community-controlled healthcare to LGBTIQ+ people in Australia

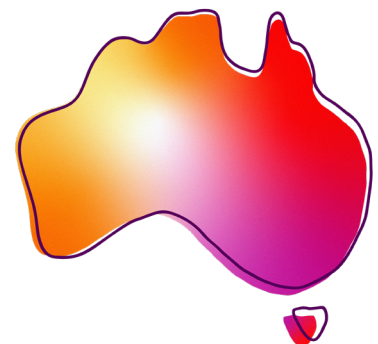
Our state and territory members are the largest providers of community-controlled primary healthcare to LGBTIQ+ communities in Australia, delivering a range of education, clinical, counselling, and peer-led support programs. These organisations evolved to address intersecting health issues such as mental health, alcohol and other drugs, gender affirming healthcare, family planning, and sexual health and public health emergencies, such as COVID-19 and Mpox, demonstrating responsiveness to, and continuing credibility with communities. To support this evolution we will pursue investment in our members to obtain and sustain services for LGBTIQ+ people.

Health Equity Matters strives to support its members, adapting as they and their communities evolve. We will lead and support our members by supporting workforce development, advocating for health equity and increased investment in LGBTIQ+ community-controlled healthcare, and providing technical support while building the evidence base for new funding and business models.

As we do with HIV, we collaborate with clinical, social and epidemiological research partners and government to understand the health of LGBTIQ+ people in Australia. We actively seek investment in services to address identified health disparities experienced by these communities.

Priorities

- 2.1 Establish Health Equity Matters as a leader in the coordination of activities with our state and territory members to respond to the needs of LGBTIQ+ communities.
- 2.2 Actively pursue government and non-government funding to secure the resourcing to support our members to deliver inclusive and effective services and programs for LGBTIQ+ communities.
- 2.3 Work with the federal government to deliver the actions of 10 Year National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people and to ensure LGBTIQ+ people, including First Nations LGBTIQ+ people are represented and involved in the design and implementation of strategies, policies and programs that impact their health and wellbeing.
- 2.4 Advocate for enhanced mainstream health responses that inclusively address the needs of LGBTIQ+ communities.
- 2.5 Strengthen and expand our partnership with LGBTIQ+ health researchers to ensure our work and that of our members are evaluated and informed by a robust and comprehensive evidence base.



Strengthening HIV responses in the Indo-Pacific

For over thirty years, Health Equity Matters has forged strong partnerships with community leaders, key population networks, technical partners and governments in the Indo-Pacific. Our work is inspired by the successful Australian response to HIV, founded on partnerships recognising that affected communities are best positioned to implement prevention, education, and support initiatives within their communities.

We champion locally led networks and organisations in HIV responses across the Asia-Pacific region to support their advocacy for Universal Health coverage to ensure community resilience to current and emerging health issues. Our primary focus is to cultivate partnerships with locally led networks, organisations and leaders throughout the region. Together, we are committed to ending the HIV epidemic in this region and globally by 2030.

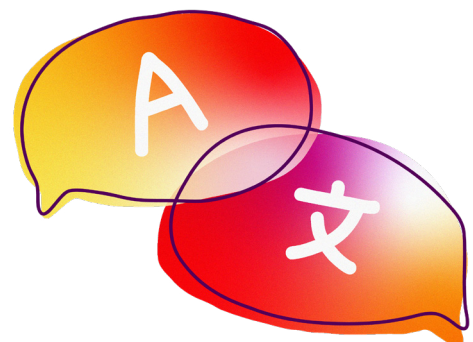
We will continue to deliver programs funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). During this strategy, we aim to achieve accreditation with the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) to validate our capacity and performance as a government partner in the region.

To strengthen organisational sustainability and position Health Equity Matters to competitively access a broader range of funding sources to sustain our international programming and augment our preparedness for ANCP accreditation, we will integrate resource mobilisation into our strategic objectives. This includes diversifying revenue beyond traditional funding to encompass multiple sources that align with our values and vision.

We will support locally led HIV programming in the Indo-Pacific through strong partnerships and engagement with global health decision-makers.

Priorities

- 3.1 Enabling leadership in the Indo-Pacific and globally to achieve an end to the HIV epidemic through programming with in-country implementing partners.
- 3.2 Foster respectful, durable and collegial partnerships with key population-led organisations in the region to deliver programs to strengthen their leadership, advocacy and management capacities, promoting inclusive and diversified HIV responses.
- 3.3 Consolidate and strengthen our relationship with DFAT and the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and other organisations investing in community-led programming in the Indo Pacific.
- 3.4 Improve the sustainability of evidence-based and locally led programs for key populations and people living with HIV.
- 3.5 Drive informed advocacy and build strong coalitions to influence effective HIV policies.
- 3.6 Broaden and diversify revenue streams through multiple sources to strengthen the financial sustainability of the organisation enabling continued delivery of international programs.



Delivering operational excellence and sustainability

As Health Equity Matters expands its reach and impact domestically and in the region, a focus on operational excellence and sustainability is essential. This enables the organisation to enhance the impact of our leadership, advocacy, and programs in Australia, Asia, and the Pacific. We will ensure our organisational systems are adaptive, robust, and sustainable while exploring new domestic and international opportunities that align with our vision.

Our strength lies in the commitment and dedication of our workforce. We will invest in their professional development to ensure their engagement, wellbeing and growth. By fostering a supportive environment and maintaining high standards of performance driven by our values, we can continue to serve our communities effectively and uphold our position as a trusted partner for government and donors.

Priorities

- 4.1 Ensure our organisational systems facilitate high performance, develop leadership and support the realisation of our strategic directions.
- 4.2 Foster an inclusive work environment that provides growth opportunities to strengthen organisational capability, staff engagement and retention to achieve our vision.
- 4.3 Leverage our reputation as a dependable and high-performance partner and build the evidence base to secure the government and donor resources needed to achieve our vision.
- 4.4 Strengthen our quality assurance systems to ensure consistency with best practice and regulations and Health Equity Matters' values.

