



COAG Health Council

AIDS 2014

Legacy Statement



Australia's Ministers for Health

Hon Peter Dutton MP
Minister for Health
Parliament of
Australia

Hon David Davis MP
Minister for Health
Victoria

**Hon Jillian Skinner
MP**
Minister for Health
New South Wales

**Hon Robyn Lambley
MLA**
Minister for Health
Northern Territory

**Hon Katy Gallagher
MLA**
Minister for Health
Australian Capital
Territory

**Hon Dr Kim Hames
MLA**
Minister for Health
Western Australia

**Hon Michael
Ferguson MP**
Minister for Health
Tasmania

**Hon Lawrence
Springborg MP**
Minister for Health
Queensland

**Hon Jack Snelling
MP**
Minister for Health
South Australia

Australian Health Ministers commit to:

- **working towards the virtual elimination of new Australian HIV transmissions by the end of 2020**
- **a rejuvenated response to HIV and ensuring that the HIV responses of all jurisdictions reflect new scientific advances and the vision of ending HIV and AIDS**
- **continue measures to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remain a high priority area for Australia's HIV response and to achieving HIV prevention and treatment targets – with a focus on research and health literacy**
- **take necessary actions, in partnership with key affected communities and sector partners, to remove barriers to accessing HIV testing, treatment, prevention, care and support across legal, regulatory, policy, social, political and economic domains**
- **continue to support high quality, multi-disciplinary, collaborative research that incorporates basic science, clinical research, social and behavioural science and operational research to inform local and international action to eliminate HIV**
- **advance actions to ensure an appropriately trained and supported HIV workforce, including in clinical, community, research and policy and program areas**
- **continue to demonstrate global leadership in the response to HIV.**

Thirty years after the discovery of the HIV virus, the HIV epidemic remains one of the greatest public health challenges of our time. However, as each year has passed, our understanding of HIV and our capacity to prevent and treat the disease has steadily advanced thanks to the dedicated work of scientists, clinicians, people with HIV, affected communities and governments.

These exciting developments are transforming the global HIV response and have led many political, scientific and community leaders to acknowledge the real possibility of achieving an “AIDS free generation” and eventually a cure.

Achieving this vision will require bold leadership and a strengthened enabling environment where all people feel confident about accessing HIV testing, prevention and treatment services. It is everyone's responsibility to help advance the dignity and human rights of people affected by HIV and to counter stigma and discrimination.

The Australian non-partisan HIV response - built on a foundation of meaningful partnership - is widely acknowledged as being remarkably successful and underpins our virtual elimination of HIV transmission among injecting drug users and in the sex industry.

However, despite our many achievements in policy, research and prevention, Australia is facing serious challenges in our HIV response, including the highest rate of newly diagnosed HIV infections seen in many years. Yet the science is unequivocal and through a combination of new diagnostic and prevention tools and highly effective antiretroviral treatments it is possible to eliminate the transmission of HIV and for people with HIV to live longer, healthier lives.

Now is the time to commit to galvanising actions and for all involved in Australia's HIV partnership to refocus efforts to meet these challenges and to fully capitalise on the opportunities before us to end the HIV epidemic.

Australia has joined other countries in committing to the global goal of an “AIDS free generation” and to meeting the actions and targets endorsed in the 2011 United Nations Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. Meeting these commitments will require Australia to be brave in its vision - especially on the eve of the Melbourne 20th International AIDS Conference we need to act on the Conference's theme and “Step up the Pace”.