

DATA, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Evaluation of programs

OBJECTIVES

To create capacity to routinely evaluate programs and services, in order to maximise reach and impact.

CURRENT ISSUES

- Evaluation is a key tool for ensuring that programs and services are appropriately tailored to the needs of key populations and at-risk individuals, and people with HIV;
- However, many organisations encounter a range of obstacles to routinely embedding evaluation into program and service delivery, including lack of expertise in the specific evaluation methodologies and tools

that produce program-relevant findings (for instance, formative evaluation or developmental evaluation), limited funding, past poor experiences with evaluations that have not produced relevant findings, and time constraints related to funding cycles that prioritise short term output reporting at the expense of longer-term monitoring of impact and outcomes;

- At an individual service level, this can undermine an organisation’s ability to adapt its services and programs to best meet client need;
- At a systemic level, this means that the sector does not have access to the full range of data needed to best focus its efforts.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

Create a dedicated national evaluation team that is available to conduct evaluation at the following levels:

- micro level – that is, to evaluate the reach, impact and outcomes of specific initiatives (for example, a health education campaign targeting a specific population), to make

recommendations about upscaling, and to identify transferability to other localities and/or populations;

- meso level – that is, to evaluate specific streams and bodies of work, such as outreach with sex workers, or social media targeting gay men, with a view to assessing the current

relevance of that modality and making recommendations for the future use (or cessation) of that modality; and

- macro level – that is, to evaluate the health and economic impact of sub-programs within the Australian HIV response.

IMPACT

Creating dedicated capacity for evaluation will generate data not currently available to the response, which in turn will improve the capacity of the workforce to deliver tailored and impactful interventions.

COST-BENEFIT

A more tailored response will increase the impact of HIV prevention efforts and result in an increase in testing and retention in care.

ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT

\$1.2 million per annum