

12 April 2019

Adj A/Prof Darryl O'Donnell
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Federation of Aids Organisations
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Dear Adj A/Prof O'Donnell,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Coalition on important issues facing your members. A response to your questions is attached.

This election will have real consequences for Australia's economy and our future.

Despite global headwinds, our economy is strong. This year, for the first time in more than a decade, the Government will deliver a Budget surplus.

A stronger economy means we can deliver on our plans to:

1. Create 1.25 million more jobs over the next five years.
2. Maintain budget surpluses and pay down debt.
3. Deliver tax relief to encourage and reward hard working Australians.
4. Guarantee increased investments for schools, hospitals and roads.
5. Keep Australians safe and our borders secure.

The alternative at this election is Mr Shorten. Labor's risky agenda includes \$387 billion of higher taxes – on retirees, housing, incomes, investments, family businesses, electricity and cars.

Thank you for communicating our response to your members.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Hirst
Federal Director

MORRISON GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF AIDS ORGANISATIONS

By keeping our economy strong, the Morrison Government is able to guarantee investment in important priorities such as improving services and support for Australian communities, at risk of, living with and affected by HIV.

A Morrison Government will invest \$45.4 million to support the implementation of the next National Blood Borne Virus (BBV) and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Strategies (2018-2022).

This investment is the greatest increase in funding to prevent, diagnose and treat STIs and BBVs in at least two decades.

We are able to provide record support for strategies and initiatives that are improving our collective efforts to prevent and address the impact of BBVs and STIs. This funding will support:

- national awareness and prevention strategies to reduce the impact of BBVs, such as HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C, and STIs, with a specific focus on syphilis, gonorrhoea and chlamydia
- projects that improve diagnosis and treatment options
- health professional and community education
- targeted assistance to diverse and vulnerable populations including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

Our approach to funding and implementing these strategies will continue to include an ongoing commitment to principles of partnership, harm reduction and a community lead response.

We will work closely with the community to address stigma and discrimination and improving quality of life, with a particular focus on actions to address the stigma that leads to delays or prevents people from seeking diagnosis, treatment, and ongoing support.

The Coalition has taken many critical steps in helping to end the transmission of HIV infection in Australia including of \$180 million investment listing tenofovir with emtricitabine for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Schedule (PBS).

The Government's \$180 million investment in this listing puts Australia in reach of being one of the first countries in the world to end the transmission of HIV.

This investments shows our commitment to people living with and at risk of acquiring HIV and our ongoing commitment to list all medicines on the PBS recommended by medical experts. Since 2013 we have made over 2000 new and amended medicines listings at an investment of over \$10.6 billion.

Under the Coalition’s stewardship, the first HIV self-testing kit was approved for use by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA). The test is a single-use rapid finger stick test for the detection of antibodies to HIV and will enable people to test for HIV in their own home.

This will make testing accessible and convenient especially for people that need to test frequently or have found attending a health service to test prohibitive.

The Morrison Government will reduce the cost of testing by implementing a Medical Benefits Schedule listing for this device following a recommendation from the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC).

The Morrison Government will provide up to \$24.3 million over four years from July 2019 for epidemiological and social surveillance activities.

The Morrison Government is committed to continuing investment in essential research on hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV, and sexually transmitted infections and we will work with the community to develop options for the prioritisation of initiatives through the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF).

We will work with the sector to enable better use of data to inform and support health policy decision making related to BBVs and STIs.

The Morrison Government pledged \$220 million over 2017-2019 to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and will pledge to the Global Fund for 2020-2022.

We will continue to invest in regional and global efforts to combat HIV and AIDS, including investing in key multilateral, regional and bilateral programs to maximise health outcomes and strengthen health security.

We will continue to support UNAIDS, the global advocate for action on HIV and AIDS that guides and coordinates the programs of 11 United Nations agencies, as well as make targeted investments in the Indo-Pacific.

The Morrison Government is strengthening health security in the Indo-Pacific through an investment of \$300 million for the Health Security Initiative from 2018 for four years.

The Morrison Government will continue to ensure that consultation with civil society, advocacy for civil society participation in UN processes, and promotion of the rights of civil society and human rights defenders will be strong features of our term on the Human Rights Council (2018-2020).

We initiated and secured our successful candidacy for the 2018-20 term of the UN Human Rights Council and a key focus of our membership has included ending discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and the protection of the rights of LGBTI people.

The Morrison Government is committed to continue to call out abuses of LGBTI human rights in appropriate international forums. The Morrison Government will also continue to consult with LGBTI organisations, development agencies, human rights organisations, philanthropy and academia, given the value we place on civil societies' contribution to international human rights discussions relating to LGBTI people.

The Morrison Government's strong economic management ensures we can continue to invest in coordinated and targeted health initiatives to prevent, treat and support Australians living with HIV.