

## AFAO: Ending HIV transmission

We have the chance to end HIV transmission in Australia, improve access to treatment and challenge stigma and discrimination. But in order for this to happen we need concerted and ongoing action. Australia's reputation as a world leader in this area is slipping as we have failed to take the necessary actions and make sufficient investment. The Australian Greens will fund in full the *Agenda 2025* developed by the Australian Federation of Aids Organisations.

### HIV in Australia

As part of our commitment to funding *Agenda 2025*, the Greens will take clear action to address AFAO's priorities in Australia.

#### **Develop and implement new National Strategies on HIV, blood-borne viruses and STIs for the period from 2023**

With the correct investment, Australia can virtually eliminate HIV transmission in the next parliamentary term. This involves developing and implementing the new National Strategies, which is particularly important as COVID-19 restrictions ease, and we continue learning about the COVID-19 impact on priority populations. The Greens will work to ensure the National Strategies on HIV, blood-borne viruses and STIs are implemented and funded beyond 2023 to sustain the gains achieved so far.

#### **Drive further reductions in HIV transmission through community-led campaigns and peer education**

Community-led campaigns and peer education have been a vital component of the Australian HIV response by maintaining a focus on health promotion. The Greens will invest \$20m annually to drive further reductions in HIV transmission through these campaigns and peer education. This investment will better meet sub-populations needing more nuanced programming, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from CALD backgrounds, women living with HIV, and people living with HIV not engaged in care.

#### **Waive copayments for HIV treatment on public health grounds, consistent with other STIs, TB and serious vaccine preventable disease**

HIV treatment is essential for people with HIV. Treatment helps people remain healthy and prevents onward HIV transmission. Treatment should be accessible to all people in Australia. Removing the co-payment to access HIV-related care will remove barriers to access for people with HIV and will progress efforts domestic and global efforts to eliminate HIV transmission. The

Greens will support the co-payment waiver to ensure Australia remains on track to reach these targets.

## **Provide subsidised access to PrEP to all who can benefit from it, regardless of visa status, on public health grounds**

The cost of subsidising PrEP is small, and the Greens recognise people who have arrived recently from overseas are at an increased risk of HIV transmission. Better access to PrEP will avert new infections through increased PrEP uptake and therefore save the government long term HIV-related healthcare costs. We support the subsidisation of PrEP for all in Australia, regardless of their visa status. This will provide equitable access to all who could benefit from PrEP.

## **Implement new models for peer-led contract tracing and wrap-around support at diagnosis**

Peer-led contact tracing and wrap-around support at diagnosis will reduce undiagnosed and untreated HIV in the community. This will improve health outcomes for groups with less evidence of success in treatment targets. The Greens will commit \$300k annually to establishing new and innovative peer-led models and wrap-around support at diagnosis to reach those at risk of being lost to care, or who are not linked to care.

## **Address the stigma that holds back HIV prevention and reduces quality of life for people living with HIV through targeted programs and research**

Stigma reduction is a critical part of the HIV response and one of the biggest challenges to eliminating HIV transmission. We support the \$6m annually to address the stigma that constrains HIV prevention efforts and reduces the quality of life for people living with HIV. This investment will lead to less health care avoidance and increased engagement with prevention, testing, and treatment services.

## **Strengthen Australia's HIV community workforce through continued investment in HIV Online Learning Australia (HOLA)**

The HIV Online Learning Australia (HOLA) platform is strengthening the capacity of the HIV community workforce to remain updated on the latest advances in HIV social research, science, and technology. The continuation of the platform will help Australia virtually eliminate HIV through the delivery of learning activities across the country. The Greens will commit \$1.55m annually to support the platform as we believe investment in civil society organisations will improve the health of affected communities.

## **Ask the Australian Law Reform Commission or otherwise commission an examination of Commonwealth, State and Territory laws on HIV to promote uniformity and alignment with public health goals**

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and technology. The continuation of the platform will help Australia virtually eliminate HIV through the delivery of learning activities across the country. The Greens will commit \$1.55m annually to support the platform as we believe investment in civil society organisations will improve the health of affected communities.

### **Ask Lifeblood to continuously review sexual activity deferrals for blood donors and the TGA to urgently consider Lifeblood recommendations so no one is needlessly excluded from donation**

The current regulations on donating blood based on sexual activity are manifestly inconsistent with the science and technology on detecting blood borne viruses. This unnecessarily limits the blood supply and prevents many people from being blood donors. The Greens support measures that monitor developments in science to ensure Australia's regulations on blood donation deferral periods are consistent with science. As part of that work, we will commit \$5 million to the Therapeutic Goods Administration to review opportunities to improve on the current framework, and an additional \$1 million per year ongoing to address unnecessary barriers.

### **Learning the lessons of COVID-19, ask research bodies to prioritise communicable diseases preparedness and response**

COVID-19 has demonstrated what can be achieved when research bodies, government, and the community collectively respond to health issues. Learning the lessons of COVID-19, the Greens will support the prioritisation of communicable diseases preparedness. This will ensure Australia is well-positioned to respond to emerging health issues through the early commencement of prevention and treatment programs. This will also enable the successes of the HIV response to be translated to emerging health threats, where relevant.

## **LGBTIQA+ Health**

### **Implement a transition program to help LGBTIQ health organisations better access MBS and other sustainable funding to deliver more primary health care to communities**

LGBTIQ communities experience significant health disparities and barriers to health care access, including a lack of LBBIQ-inclusive and specific services. The Greens commit to \$17.9 million to allow LGBTIQ communities to deliver more services through MBS billing and other sustainable funding sources. We believe this will begin closing the health inequities experienced by LGBTIQ communities.

### **Develop and implement a national LGBTIQ+ health and wellbeing action plan**

LGBTIQA+ people have health care needs which are not always met by the current system. The Greens will provide dedicated funding to establish a national LGBTIQA+ health and wellbeing action plan. The Greens will provide \$285m to ensure all LGBTIQA+ people have access to holistic and comprehensive health services regardless of whether they live in a capital city or a rural town.

It will include national standards and training for health professionals to ensure they can provide world class care to LGBTIQ+ patients, particularly patients who have variations in sex characteristics, or are transgender, gender diverse or non binary. We would create a Minister for Equality and as part of their work, they would play a central role in ensuring that a National health and wellbeing plan is integrated into the work of other departments beyond the Health department, and coordinated with state and territory governments.

## **Prioritise LGBTIQ+ community-led organisations when funding health and wellbeing services for LGBTIQ+ communities**

LGBTIQ+ community controlled health organisations are best placed to respond to the needs of the LGBTIQ+ community. The Australian Greens will provide \$70 million grants fund over four years from 1 July 2022 for LGBTIQ+ community-controlled health organisations; as part of that work, we will ensure that procurement and tendering processes appropriately prioritise LGBTIQ+ community-controlled organisations within the funding program.

## **Implement the ABS 2020 Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables in datasets across the health system and in the 2026 Census**

The Australian Greens believe that the contribution of people with diverse sexualities, gender identities and intersex status and their communities is unique and valuable to the Australian community. That's why we want to see the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other relevant agencies to improve statistical data collection on people with diverse sexualities, gender identities, intersex variations and their families.

The Greens will allocate \$10m in dedicated funding to implement Australian Bureau of Statistics 2020 Standard on Sex, Gender, Variations in Sex Characteristics, and Sexual Orientation Variables in data collection across Government, including through the Census.

## **Our communities abroad**

### **Australia's contribution to the Global Fund**

The Greens recognise Australia's role in our region in providing support and funding to regional responses to HIV and for maintaining strong and effective partnerships between community organisations in Australia and amongst our neighbours. The Greens would restore the funding to these crucial programs to ensure that the fight to eliminate HIV can continue in the region.

The Greens understand the role of Australia in sending a clear message to the world and our region that funding to eliminate HIV should be prioritised, through contributing to the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Greens will commit \$450 million from Australia's development budget to set a strong example and ensure the Fund can continue its work in a sustainable and consistent way. As part of this commitment, the Australian Greens will work with the sector to set aside contributions based on need in recipient communities. The Australian Greens believe our global aid program should be fair, based on need, and delivered in strong

partnership with local communities and through organisations led by recipient communities where possible.

## **Support the establishment of a network of LGBTIQ organisations and partners to promote LGBTIQ human rights regionally and across the globe**

It is essential Australia demonstrates its commitment to LGBTIQ human rights across the region and globally. The Greens support the \$300k annual investment needed to establish an LGBTIQ network of organisations to provide the government with advice on the rights of LGBTIQ human rights and to assist in monitoring human rights violations globally.