

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



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NEW STRATEGY TO IMPROVE VICTORIANS' SEXUAL HEALTH

The Andrews Labor Government is tackling the rates of blood-borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections with a bold new strategy to help all Victorians achieve the best possible sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today launched the *Victorian Sexual and Reproductive Health and Viral Hepatitis Strategy 2022-30*, which sets the direction for sexual and reproductive health and viral hepatitis prevention, screening and testing, treatment, and care.

This is the first time that reproductive health, sexual health and viral hepatitis have come together under the same framework.

Made up of seven plans, the strategy is tailored to specific epidemics, conditions and cohorts. It provides the key actions required to guide each response across HIV, sexually transmissible infections, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and women's sexual and reproductive health.

The first-ever *Victorian Aboriginal Sexual and Reproductive Health Plan 2022-30* is also included in the strategy – recognising the Labor Government's plan to improving the health, wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal Victorians within a self-determination framework.

The strategy sets bold targets for Victorians' sexual and reproductive health, including eliminating congenital syphilis by 2030, eliminating hepatitis B and hepatitis C as public health concerns by 2030, and the virtual elimination of new HIV transmissions by 2025.

More than 500 people engaged in statewide consultations between 2020 and 2022 to develop the strategy. This included people living with and affected by blood-borne viruses, sexually transmitted infections and reproductive health conditions, and people working across the sexual and reproductive health and viral hepatitis sectors.

The *Victorian Budget 2022/23* allocated more than \$3.4 million to strengthen the Victorian sexual and reproductive health service system and increase access to prevention, testing, treatment and care.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"This strategy sets ambitious but achievable targets for Victorians' sexual and reproductive health – and will help guide decision-making when it comes to this important part of everyone's health."

"This is about ensuring people have the care they require and reducing the stigma and discrimination that can be associated with sexual and reproductive health and viral hepatitis."