

Media Release

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services



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BOLD NEW PLAN TO ELIMINATE HIV IN VICTORIA

The Andrews Labor Government has unveiled a bold new plan to develop a cure for HIV, backed by more than \$1 million in new funding.

Speaking today at the fifth annual Blood Borne Virus and Sexually Transmissible Infections Forum, Minister for Health Jill Hennessy launched the *Victorian HIV Strategy 2017-2020* – a roadmap to the virtual elimination of new HIV infections by 2020.

The plan sets out the Labor Government's strategy to improve prevention, testing and treatment of HIV, and work with affected communities to reduce HIV stigma and discrimination.

Its key targets are to have 95 per cent of people with HIV diagnosed, accessing the best treatment, and achieving undetectable viral load by 2030. It also seeks to eliminate HIV related discrimination and stigma completely.

The ambitious Labor Government plan is backed by \$1.2 million in funding, to find a breakthrough cure for HIV.

In addition, a statewide Testing Week for sexually transmitted infections and blood-borne viruses in Victoria will be held in the second week of September.

It's the first time an initiative of this kind has been held in Victoria, and will boost education about the need for testing and rates of people being tested.

In Victoria, HIV continues to disproportionately affect gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men. Removing the stigma and discrimination from Victorian laws, services and society is a key component of the HIV strategy.

For the first time in Australia, the plan also acknowledges women, trans and gender diverse people as priority populations.

The Labor Government is continuing to expand access to the life changing HIV prevention medication PrEP, which evidence shows to be up to 99 per cent effective in preventing HIV infection.

The *HIV Strategy* was developed with the support and expertise of the entire sector including researchers, clinicians, healthcare professionals, community and grassroots associations and people living with HIV.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jill Hennessy

"We are determined to rid Victoria of HIV, and the discrimination and stigma it causes."

"We are setting the bar high. Our bold plan will see Victoria beat targets set by the UN for the virtual elimination of new HIV infections across the world."

"The strategy is backed by more than a million dollars in funding to help us finally develop a cure for HIV."