

# THE FUTURE OF THE AUSTRALIAN HIV RESPONSE – A CONSENSUS STATEMENT ON THE PROGRESS TOWARDS VIRTUAL ELIMINATION AND BEYOND

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## Background:

Rates of new diagnoses of HIV have continued to decline in Australia, with the possibility to achieve virtual elimination within reach by 2030. This research aimed to support and lead the HIV response in identifying priority areas and activities to achieve and move beyond virtual elimination.

## Methods:

A co-designed, cross-sectoral Delphi consensus was performed. Firstly, a steering committee of clinicians, researchers and community members was formed to draft statements for the Delphi process. A qualitative analysis was conducted to form 35 draft statements.

Secondly, an expert panel was formed using a purposive and then a snowballing method. There were 164 cross-sectoral HIV experts across Australia invited to score the draft statements' importance to achieve and move beyond virtual elimination using a 4-point Likert scale. Experts were asked for suggestions and comments at the end of the Round-One survey. A statement required a score over 80% to achieve consensus. Statements that failed were re-scored in Round-Two, in addition to six newly formed statements drafted from Round-One feedback.

## Results:

In Round-One, 106 experts across the HIV response scored 30 statements above 80%. In Round-Two, 5 statements failed to reach consensus after re-scoring and 6 new statements achieved a consensus, scored by 89 experts.

The following 6 themes categorised the final 36 statements – Prevention, Testing, Treatment, Management & Care, Stigma & Discrimination, Community-led Response and Research.

## Conclusion:

This research provides a roadmap to ensure Australia remains on its trajectory towards virtual elimination of HIV transmission and to move beyond this point. This research also identifies areas of priority and activities required to build upon the response's achievements and continue to reduce new HIV diagnoses.

This research utilised a rigorous and collaborative approach, ensuring that the statements represented a holistic Australian HIV response to continue achieving world-class results.

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