

# Progress towards HCV elimination in Australia: The impact of DAA therapy and emerging challenges

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*I acknowledge the Bidjigal people that are the Traditional Custodians of the land where the we stands today. We pay our respects to the Elders both past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are joining us today.*

# Acknowledgements

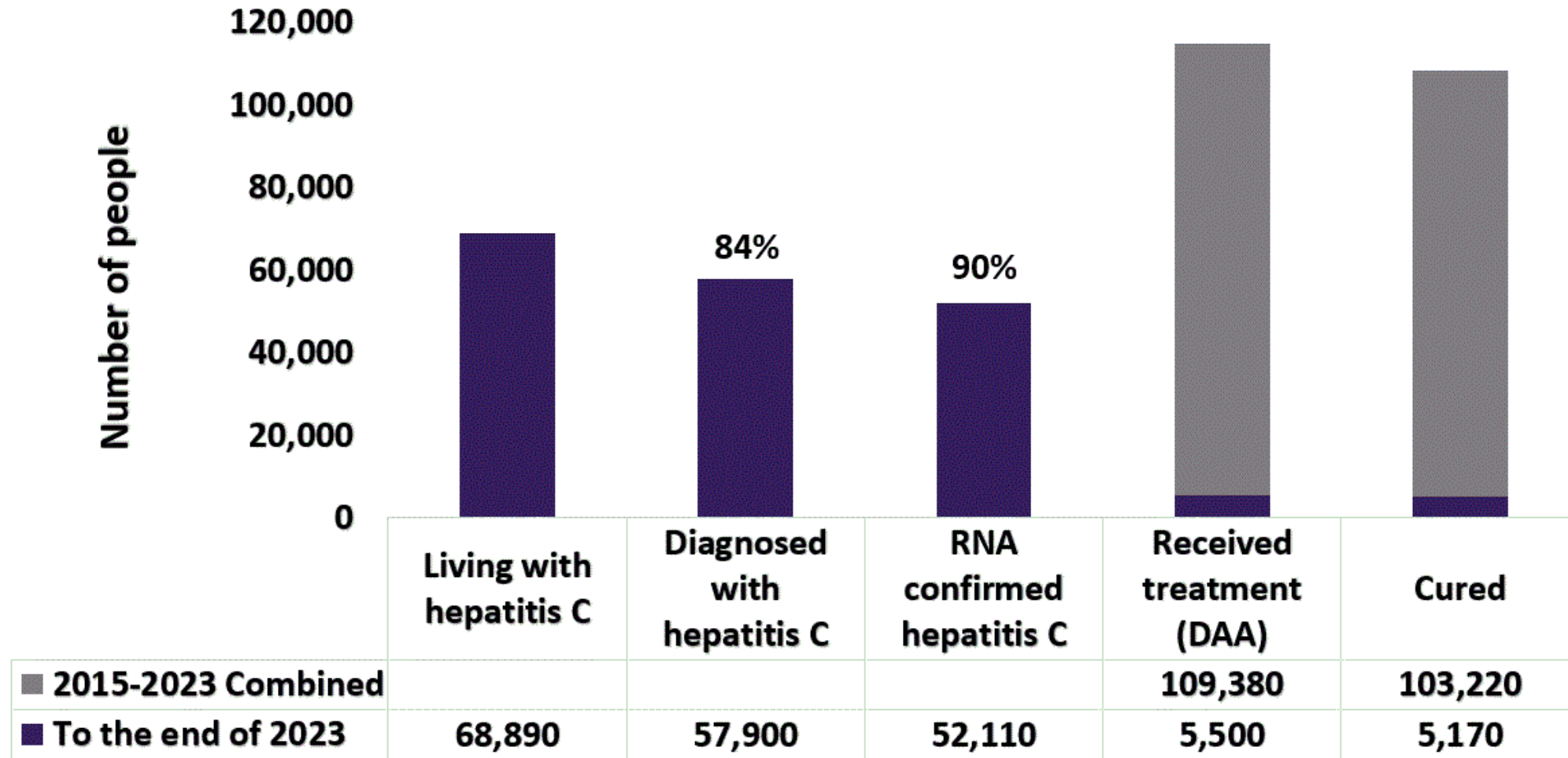
- Gregory J Dore, Jason Grebely, Behzad Hajarizadeh, Jonathan King, Sky McGregor, Rebecca Guy, Richard T Gray
- Kirby Institute, UNSW, Australia

# HCV in Australia

- **Australia's goal to achieve the WHO HCV elimination targets by 2030**
  - $\leq 5$  per 100,000 annual incidence at population level
  - $\leq 2$  per 100 annual incidence in people who inject drugs
  - $\leq 2$  per 100,000 annual mortality at population level ( $< 6$  per 100,000 for HBV/HCV)
  - 80% eligible people treated
- **Significant progress:** driven by universal DAA access (since 2016) and expanded Point of Care Testing (POCT)
- **Emerging challenges:** high reinfection rates persist, stigma, barriers to accessing treatment, high infection risk in prisons

Guidance for country validation of viral hepatitis elimination and path to elimination: technical report. WHO 2023

# HCV cascade of care 2023



# Treatment coverage - National

- Annual number of people treated in Australia

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Treatment uptake	32,458	21,249	15,355	11,433	8,215	6,557	5,175	5,499

↓ 21%    ↑ 6%

- Treatment coverage in Australia

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Treatment coverage	20%	33%	42%	48%	53%	57%	60%	63%

# Australia's progress snapshots: 2015 vs. 2023

	End 2015	End 2023	
<b>Chronic HCV prevalence</b>	0.7%	0.3%	
<b>People living with HCV</b>	162,590	68,890	↓ 58%
<b>Annual HCV infections</b>	5,520	1,740	↓ 68%
<b>Annual decompensated cirrhosis cases (viraemic+cured)</b>	550	370	
<b>Annual hepatocellular carcinoma cases (viraemic+cured)</b>	420	330	
<b>Annual liver-related deaths (viraemic+cured)</b>	720	530	↓ 27%

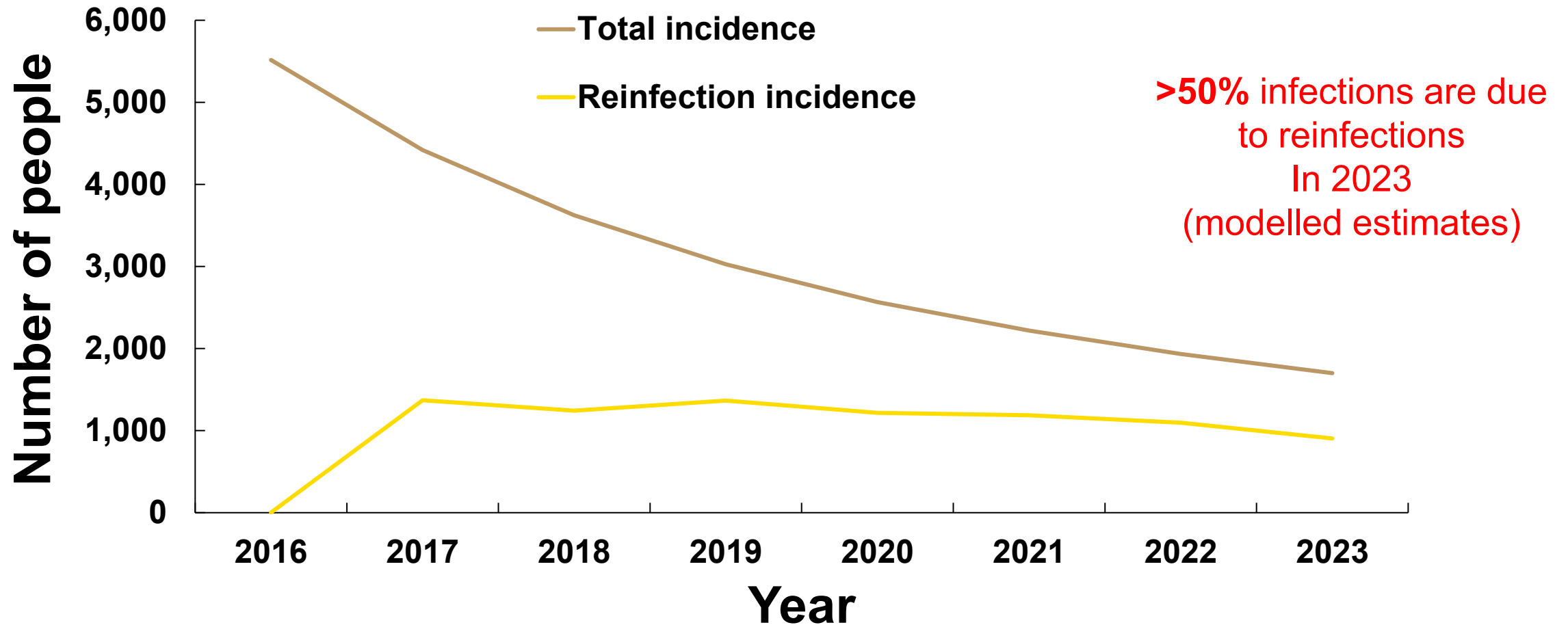
# National status against 2030 targets

Indicators for 2030 targets	Year 2023
Treatment coverage	63%
Incidence $\leq 5/100,000$ (WHO 2023)	7.3/100,000
Liver-related deaths (viraemic+cured) $\leq 2/100,000$ (WHO 2023) $\leq 1/100,000$ (Australian 2030 target- draft)	2.2/100,000

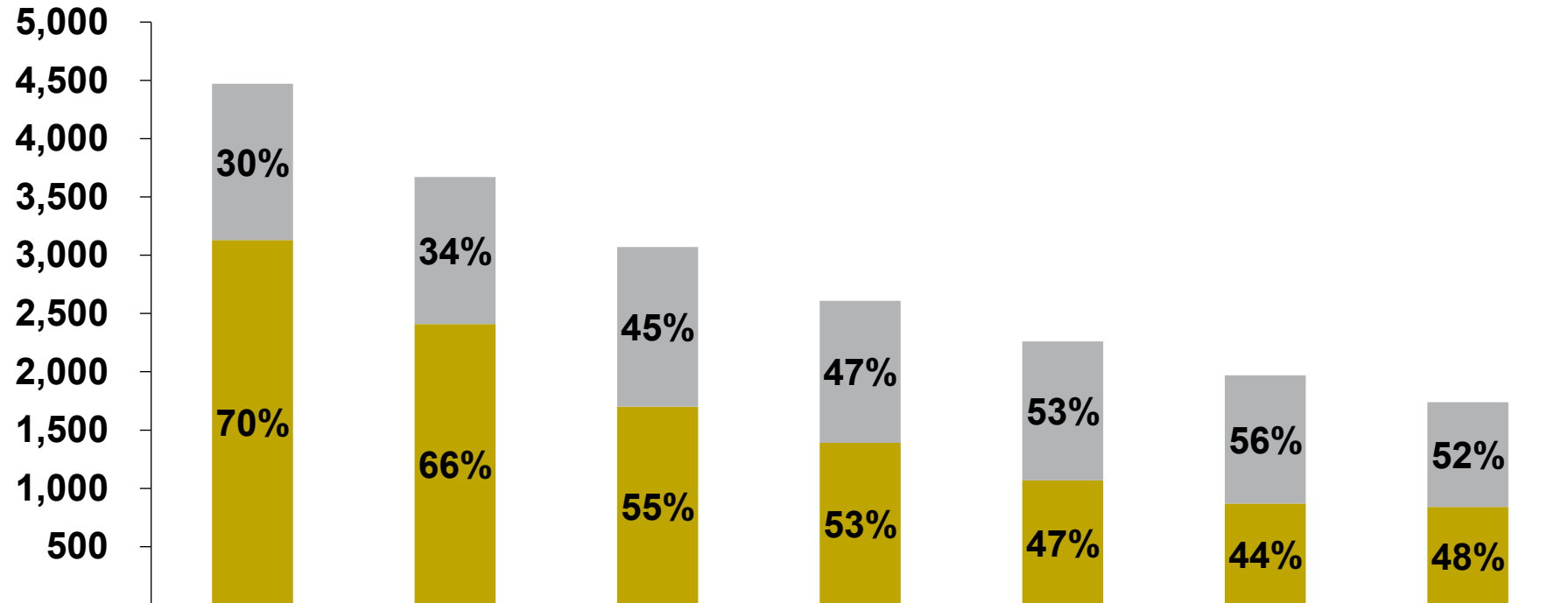
# Persistent challenges

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# HCV incidence, including reinfection



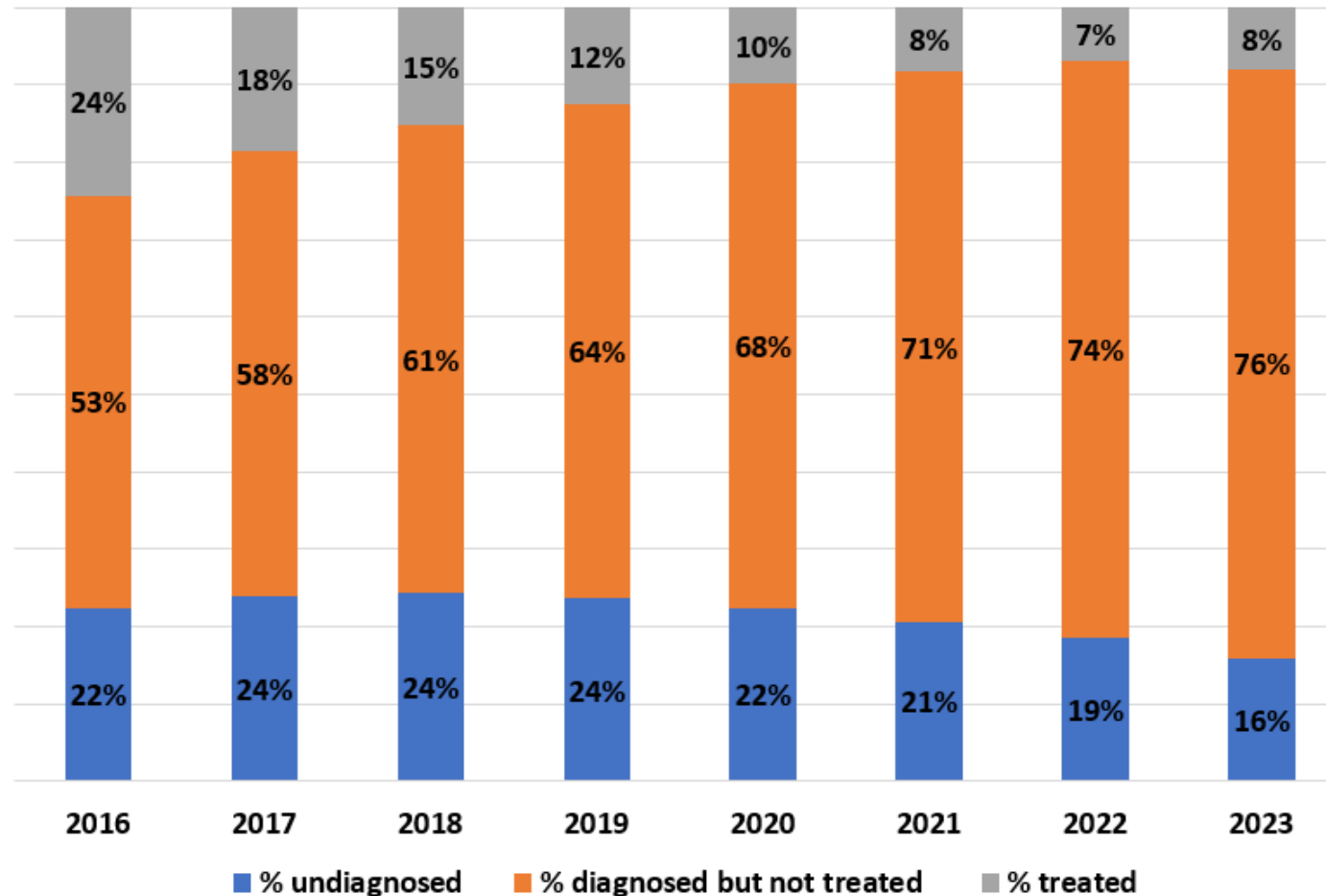
# HCV incidence including reinfection



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Total incident infections</b>	<b>4,470</b>	<b>3,670</b>	<b>3,070</b>	<b>2,610</b>	<b>2,260</b>	<b>1,970</b>	<b>1,740</b>
<b>■ Reinfection incidence</b>	<b>1,340</b>	<b>1,260</b>	<b>1,370</b>	<b>1,220</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>900</b>
<b>■ Primary incidence</b>	<b>3,130</b>	<b>2,410</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>1,390</b>	<b>1,070</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>840</b>

# HCV cascade gaps

Hepatitis C diagnosis and care cascade gaps



# What is next?

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# Conclusion: A Renewed Path to Elimination

- **DAA Transformed HCV Care:** unprecedented progress achieved
- **Need for complementary strategies:** ongoing reinfections
  - Harm reduction services and enhanced prevention efforts are needed
- **Positive Momentum:** increased treatment uptake in 2023, but no further increase in 2024
- **Future Focus:** targeted strategies to enhance prevention & treatment
  - Prisons: enhanced harm reduction, early detection & treatment of reinfection
  - First Nations: younger male population particularly vulnerable
- Collective, sustained effort is essential for 2030

**Thank you!**