



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Syphilis in WA - A Tale of Three Regional Outbreaks

Dr Paul Armstrong : ASHM Syphilis Symposium

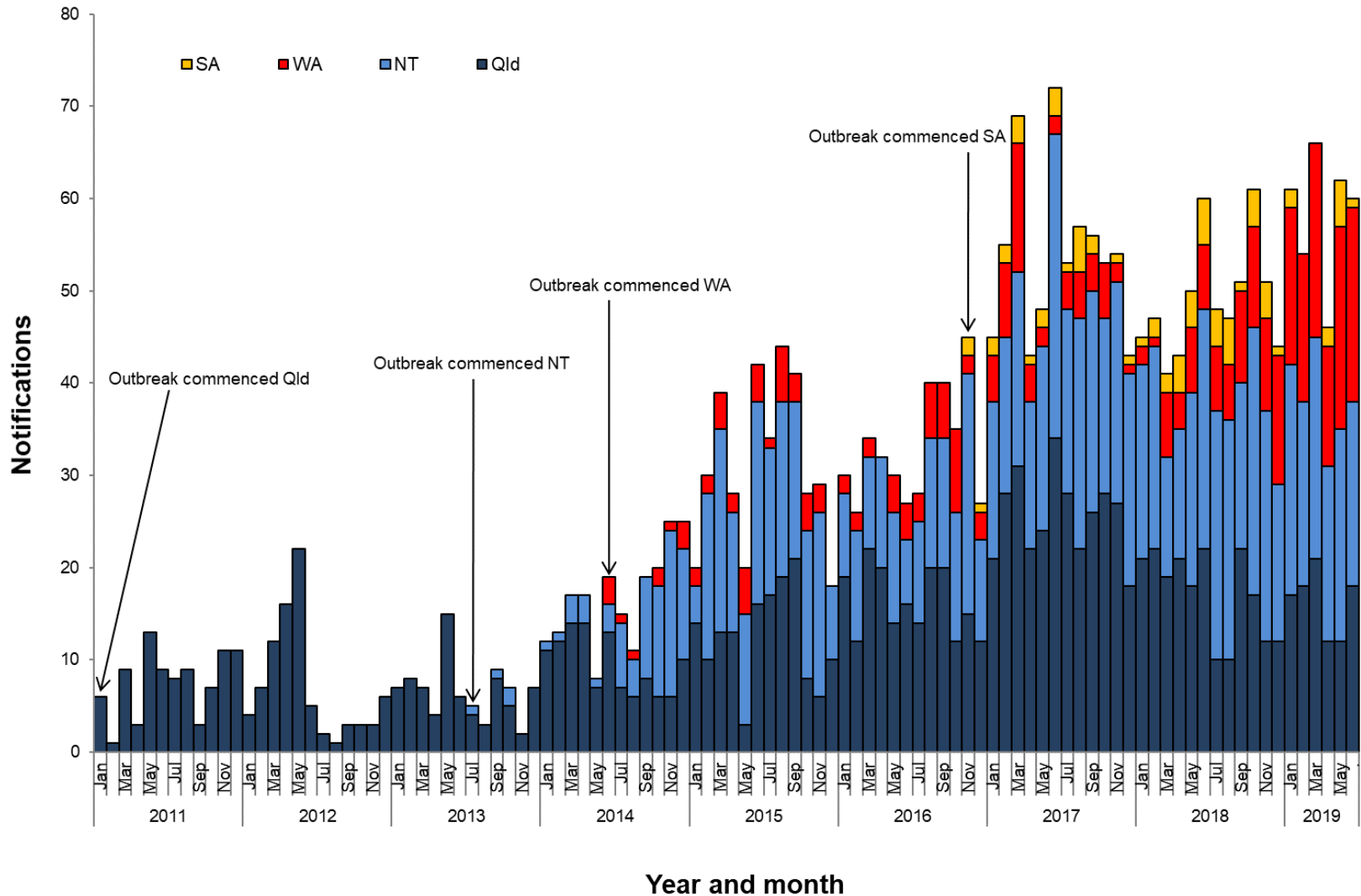


Overview

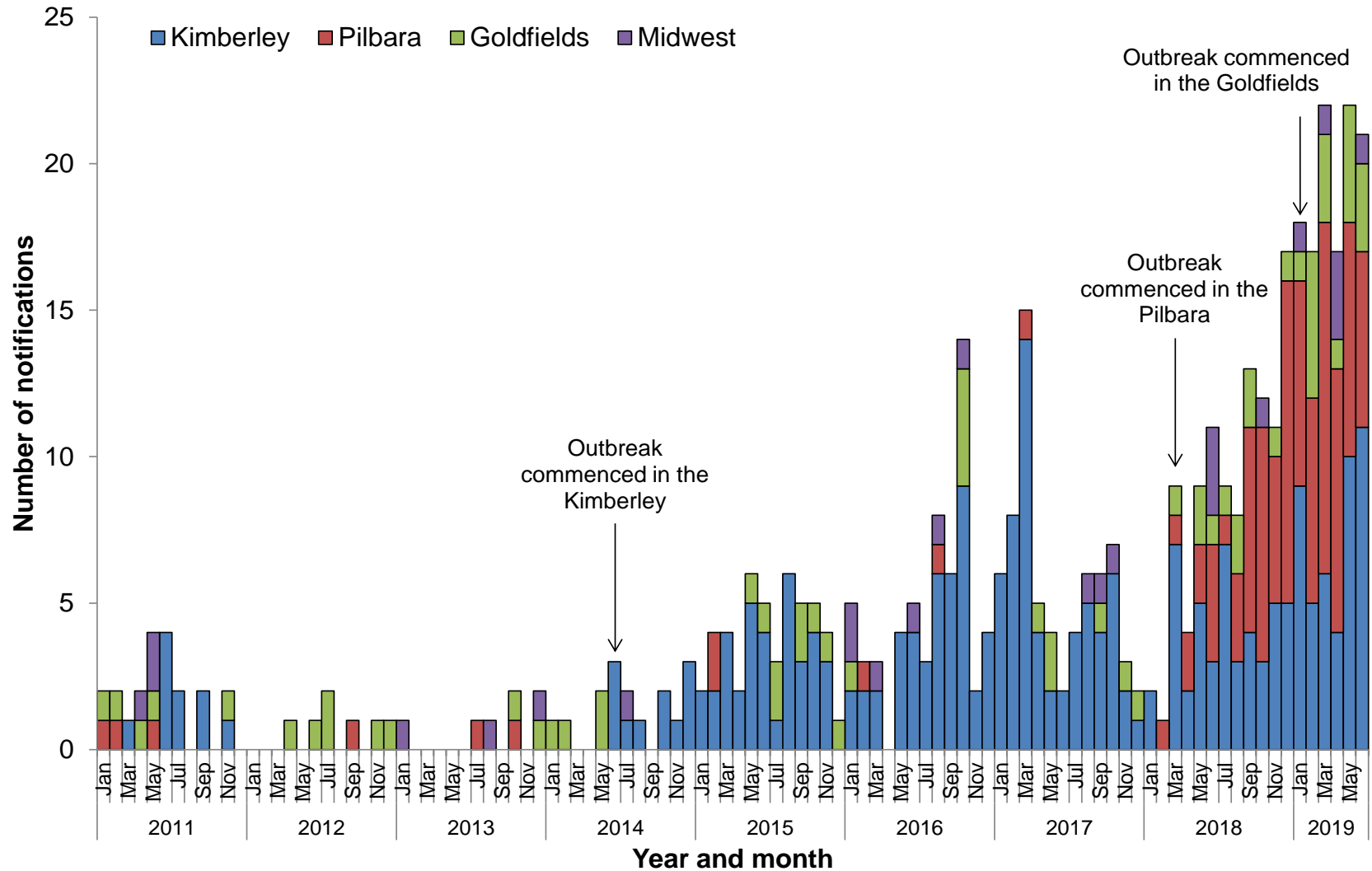


- Epidemiology
- Governance arrangements
- State response
- Regional response
- Key actions
- Next steps

Number of infectious syphilis outbreak cases among Aboriginal people in affected regions of QLD, the NT, WA and SA from the commencement of the outbreak in each jurisdiction to 30 June 2019



Epidemic curve showing the number of infectious syphilis notifications among Aboriginal people in remote areas of WA, Jan 2011 to Jun 2019



Epidemiological characteristics of infectious syphilis notifications among Aboriginal people in affected regions in WA to 30 June 2019

	Kimberley	Pilbara	Goldfields	Total
Cases Q1 2019	19	26	8	53
Cases Q2 2019	26	22	9	57
Total cases	236	90	17	334
% 15-19 yrs	31%	31%	6%	30%
% 20-24 yrs	27%	24%	6%	25%
% 25-29 yrs	12%	12%	35%	13%
% 30-34 yrs	9%	16%	6%	10%
% male	39%	49%	47%	42%
% female	61%	51%	53%	58%
Congenital cases	0	1	0	1
Deaths in congenital cases	0	0	0	0

Epidemiology – case numbers



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Epidemiology – age distribution



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Epidemiology – distribution, by sex

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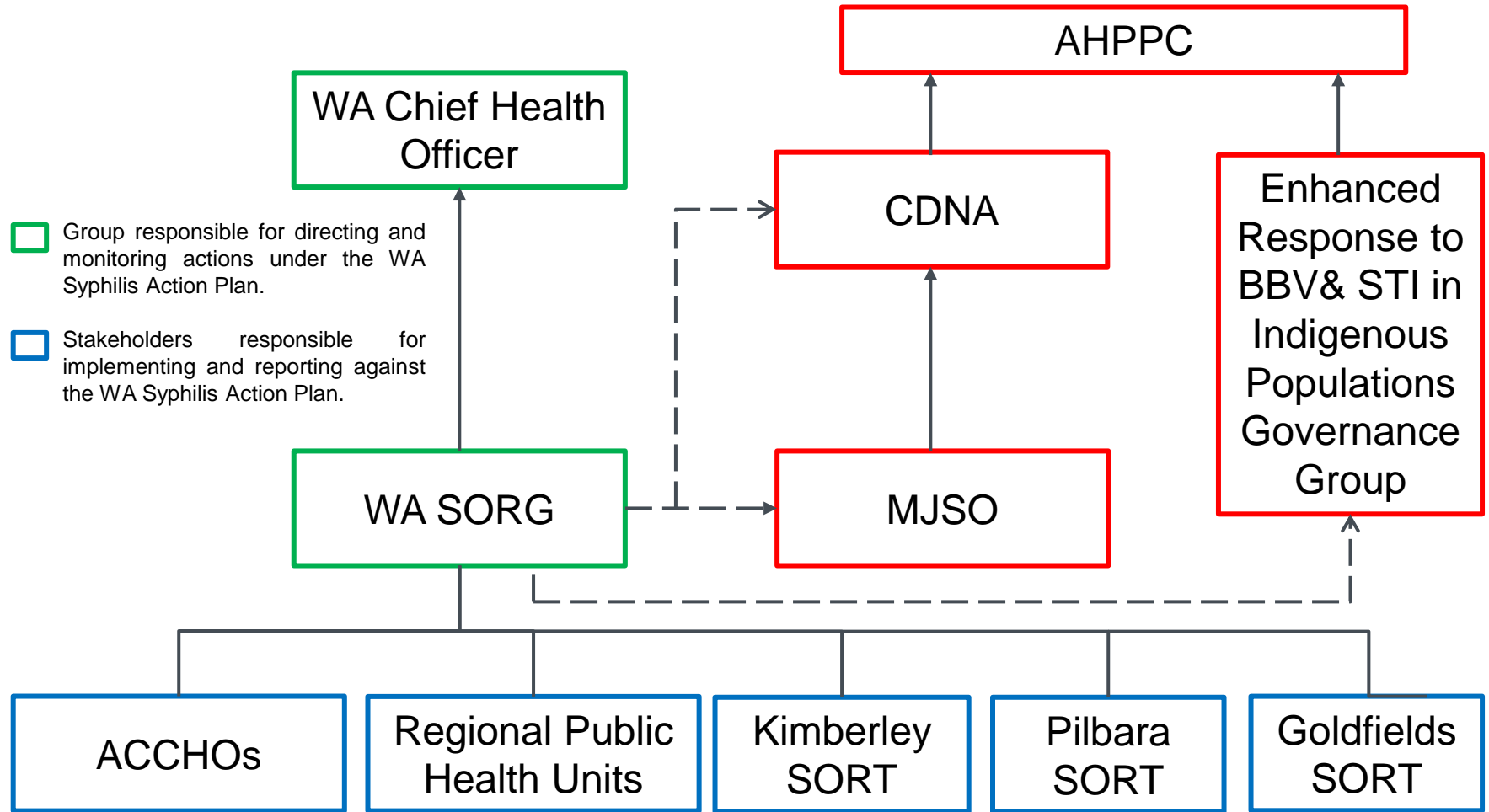
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Epidemiology – congenital cases

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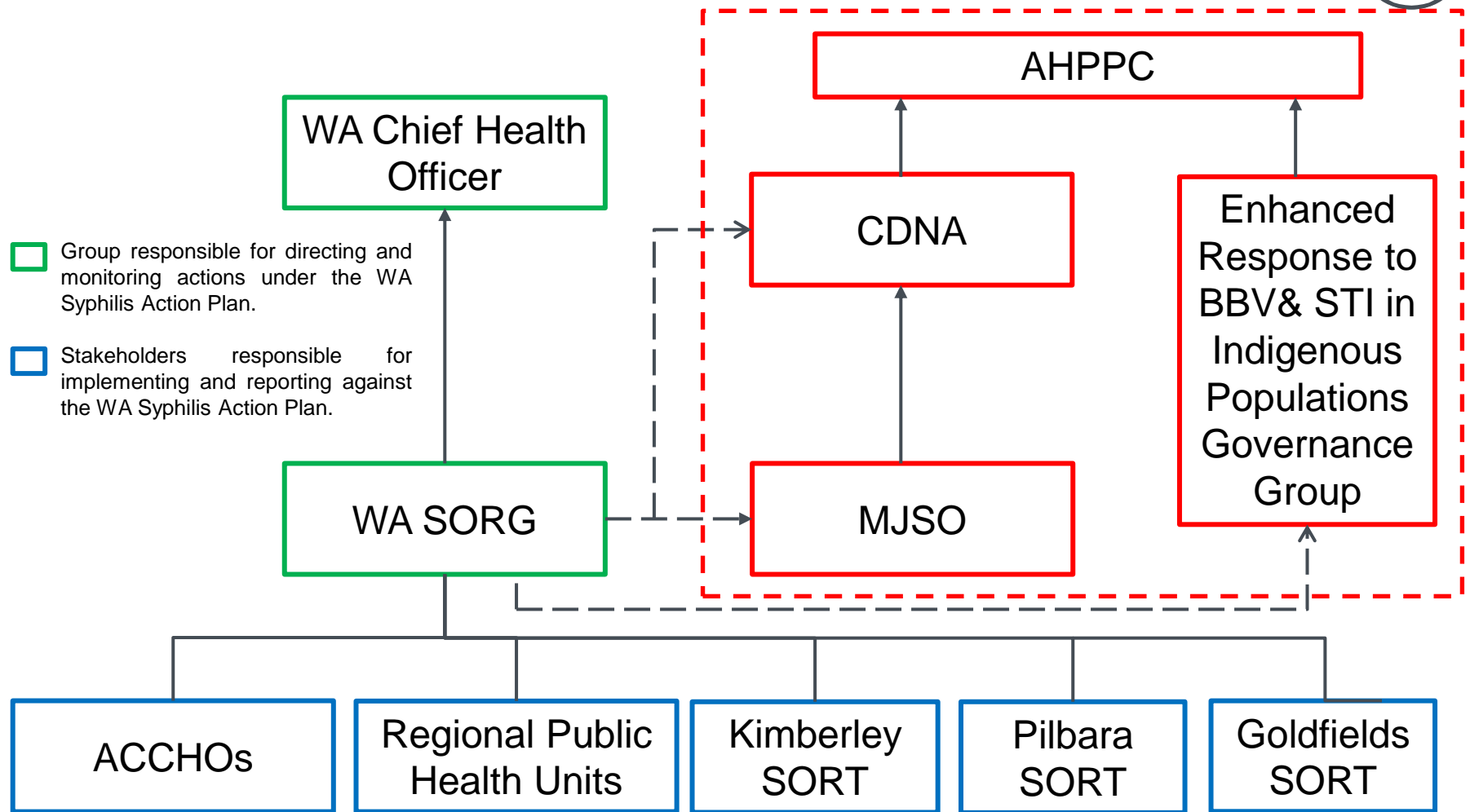
Governance arrangements



ACCHOs: Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations
AHPPC: Australian Health Protection Principal Committee
MJSO: Multi-Jurisdictional Syphilis Outbreak Working Group

WA SORG: WA Syphilis Outbreak Response Group
CDNA: Communicable Disease Network Australia
SORT: Syphilis Outbreak Response Team

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State response - WA SORG



- The WA Syphilis Outbreak Response Group (WA SORG) was established in August 2018.
- WA SORG is **co-chaired** by the Communicable Disease Control Directorate and the Aboriginal Health Council of WA.
- **Membership** includes the WA Country Health Service, regional health services (government and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services) and other key stakeholders.
- Convened a state-wide workshop in November 2018 to inform development of the **WA Syphilis Outbreak Response Action Plan**.
- A **Monitoring Framework** aligned to the Action Plan is being finalised

Priority Area Working Groups

1. Prevention, education and community engagement.
2. Testing, treatment and contact tracing.
3. Workforce development (including training and orientation).
4. Surveillance and reporting.
5. Antenatal and postnatal care.

Key Actions at the state level

- Online syphilis training
- Priority Area Working Groups
- Scoping social media and resources
- Syphilis SASA
- Communiques
- Syphilis register
- Congenital syphilis case review protocol
- Recording syphilis tests in the WA pregnancy database



Regional Responses

- Established syphilis outbreak response teams (SORTs)
- Developed regional action plans
- Syphilis dashboards and targets
- Roll out of point-of-care testing and training
- Secured funding for additional staff
- Engaged in the Priority Area Working Groups

Regional responses (cont.)



- Raising awareness about syphilis
 - education to staff across regions
 - enhanced community sexual health education
- Successful grant applications
- Health promotion programs and materials



Regional responses (cont.)

- Enhanced sexual health screening, including antenatal screening
- Improving protocols and processes:
 - Laboratory notifications
 - Data collection and monitoring
 - Congenital syphilis protocol
 - Recall system for follow-up syphilis tests

Next Steps



- Monitor syphilis activity in other regions
- Funding social media training in the regions
- Roll out of POCT
- Scoping work for the syphilis register
- Finalise monitoring framework
- Utilising modelling work conducted by Kirby



Thank You