

## **INVOLVEMENT, INNOVATION, AND STIGMA: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VICTORIAN HIV STRATEGY 2017-2020**

### **Authors:**

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### **Background:**

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services funds partner stakeholders through a decentralised, activity-based model. Amid increasing HIV notifications and renewed commitment after AIDS 2014, the Department convened a stakeholder advisory group which emphasised the need for a unified and coherent framework to achieve long-term targets.

### **Approach:**

The *Victorian HIV Strategy 2017-2020* frames the local HIV response around the virtual elimination of new transmissions by 2020. In developing the strategy the government consulted with stakeholders, who emphasised the involvement of people living with HIV (PLHIV) and priority populations in the HIV response. PLHIV and representative organisations stressed the far-reaching impact of stigma. An innovative policy design resulted, focused on four action areas (prevent, test, treat, and stigma) and three system enablers (workforce, coordination, and evidence).

### **Outcomes/Impact:**

The involvement, engagement and input of priority populations are fundamental to innovative policy and programs. They give authority to the strategy and create the enabling environment for reform. Placing stigma and PLHIV at the heart of the strategy ensures that policies are responsive to the needs of PLHIV, and do not further stigmatise. The reconvened HIV working group will advise the Department on implementing the strategy. Existing measures of the impact of HIV will include stigma and the development of baseline stigma indicators. The group will report progress against strategic targets every four years, with annual review of progress against priority actions.

### **Innovation and significance:**

Victoria is the first Australian jurisdiction to make stigma a policy priority, with the involvement and centrality of PLHIV fundamental in modernising and strengthening the Victorian HIV response. The new policy framework led to the Victorian Government endorsing the U=U campaign and establishing Victoria's first HIV peer navigator program. Funded agencies now report on how funded activities reduce stigma, and specifically address how PLHIV are meaningfully included.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

There are no interests to disclose.