

# Involvement, innovation and stigma

The development of the *Victorian HIV Strategy 2017-2020*

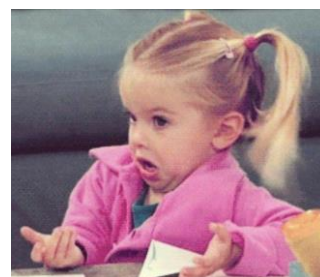
John Manwaring  
Senior Policy Officer (HIV)  
Department of Health and Human Services, Victoria



## Acknowledgement of country



## Disclosure of interest



## A brief recent history of the Victorian HIV response

- Melbourne selected to host the 2014 International AIDS Conference
- Renewed focus on the Australian and Victorian HIV responses and increased political commitment
- National and state-level consultations highlighted gaps, challenges, successes, and helped refine goals
- Resulted in the COAG Health Council AIDS 2014 Legacy Statement and Seventh National HIV Strategy

## Accomplishments

- VicPrEP demonstration study
- PRONTO! Rapid HIV testing service
- Repeal of s 19A of the *Crimes Act 1958*
- Improvements to ACCESS data and reporting
- Convened first meeting of Fast-Track Cities Initiative
- Launch of the Ending HIV campaign

## Opportunities and partnerships



## Consultation findings



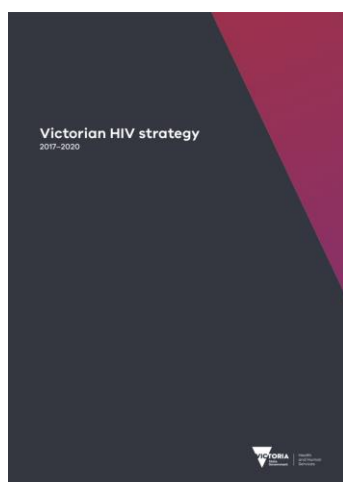
*'Our society is changing and we are slowly gaining equality including naming racism, trans and homophobia. HIV stigma is still very real. We have to work together to ensure no one is left behind.'*

*'Our services should reflect the changes that we are seeing and that they should also be welcoming and safe for all people with or affected by HIV.'*

*'We are at a pivotal point in the epidemic. We have exciting new tools and science driving our ability to eliminate this virus. We must do everything to use these opportunities.'*

*'If we keep doing more of the same, we will get more of the same. It is time to do our work differently, to be bold and innovative and move from merely managing this epidemic to eliminating it.'*

## The Victorian HIV Strategy 2017-2020



### Victorian HIV strategy

By 2020 we aim to virtually eliminate new HIV transmissions.  
By 2030 we aim to eliminate stigma and discrimination related to HIV and achieve the 95-95-95 targets for diagnosis, treatment and viral load.

**Priority objectives**

- Victorians are supported to reduce their risk of contracting HIV
- Victorians with HIV will have their status
- Victorians with HIV will have access to best practice evidence based treatment and care
- PLHIV and affected communities are free from HIV-related stigma and discrimination

**Priority focus areas**

Victoria will achieve its objectives through actions that focus on people, communities and the health system. It will act in partnership with researchers, clinicians, community organisations, policy makers, and people living with and affected by HIV.

- Risk reduction
- Diagnosis
- Treatment
- Eliminate stigma and discrimination

Victoria will sustain the virtual elimination of HIV transmission in people who inject drugs, among sex workers and from mother to child.

**System enablers**

Strengthening the Victorian health system will:

- ensure the Victorian workforce has the skills, knowledge and attitude needed to deliver best practice HIV prevention, testing, treatment and care
- integrate systems and settings to meet the needs of people living with, affected by, or at risk of HIV
- improve the quality and completeness of HIV data collection and support research.

**Priority outcomes for 2020**

The proportion of all people with HIV who are diagnosed will be	The proportion of all PLHIV who are accessing appropriate treatment will be	The proportion of PLHIV with an undetectable viral load will be	The proportion of people experiencing and reporting HIV-related stigma and discrimination will be
95%	95%	95%	0%

PLHIV and affected communities are free from HIV-related stigma and discrimination

Eliminate stigma and discrimination

# Stigma as a policy priority: why does it matter?



**“Stigma is its own sort of disease. It injures and paralyses us, preventing us from looking after our own health and wellbeing. As an HIV community, our primary focus must be reducing stigma, and helping people build resilience in order to confront it.”**

**Richard Keane**  
President  
Living Positive Victoria

# Meaningful involvement



### Victoria's priority populations

As the demographic profile of HIV changes in Victoria we have an urgent challenge as well as an opportunity to focus our efforts on those who are most vulnerable and most affected by HIV. These people include:

- people living with HIV, gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- culturally and linguistically diverse and refugee communities
- people from or who travel to high prevalence countries
- people who inject drugs
- prisoners
- sex workers
- young people
- transgender and gender diverse people
- women at greater risk of HIV

The Victorian Labor Government is strongly committed to equality regardless of gender or gender identity. Accordingly, this strategy includes both women and trans and gender diverse people in every population in their own right. This strategy recognises that:

challenges these populations face when living with or at risk of HIV both represent significant disadvantages as a result of the interaction of gender and gender identity with other socio-economic factors, placing them at greater risk of harm.

The Government acknowledges that HIV can affect anyone, regardless of whether they belong to a priority population.

Victoria takes acknowledgement that there are specific socio-economic groups, such as international students, people with disability and other people living with HIV, people who are born in areas with high prevalence and people who are in regional areas, who will require tailored responses.

People living with and affected by HIV are central to Victoria's HIV response. Their experience, engagement and participation are essential to the development of our programs and policies.

People living with HIV must be the focus of – and equal partners in – their treatment, care and other decisions that affect their lives.

Associate Professor Mark Snow  
Head of Public Health Discipline  
The Burnet Institute

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## What are we doing about it?

- Modernising regulatory standards for HIV testing
- Establishing a peer navigator program for people newly diagnosed with HIV
- Reframing funding and reporting guidelines to address stigma
- Updating the *National Guidelines for the Management of People with HIV Who Place Others at Risk*
- Re-establishing the Departmental HIV Working Group

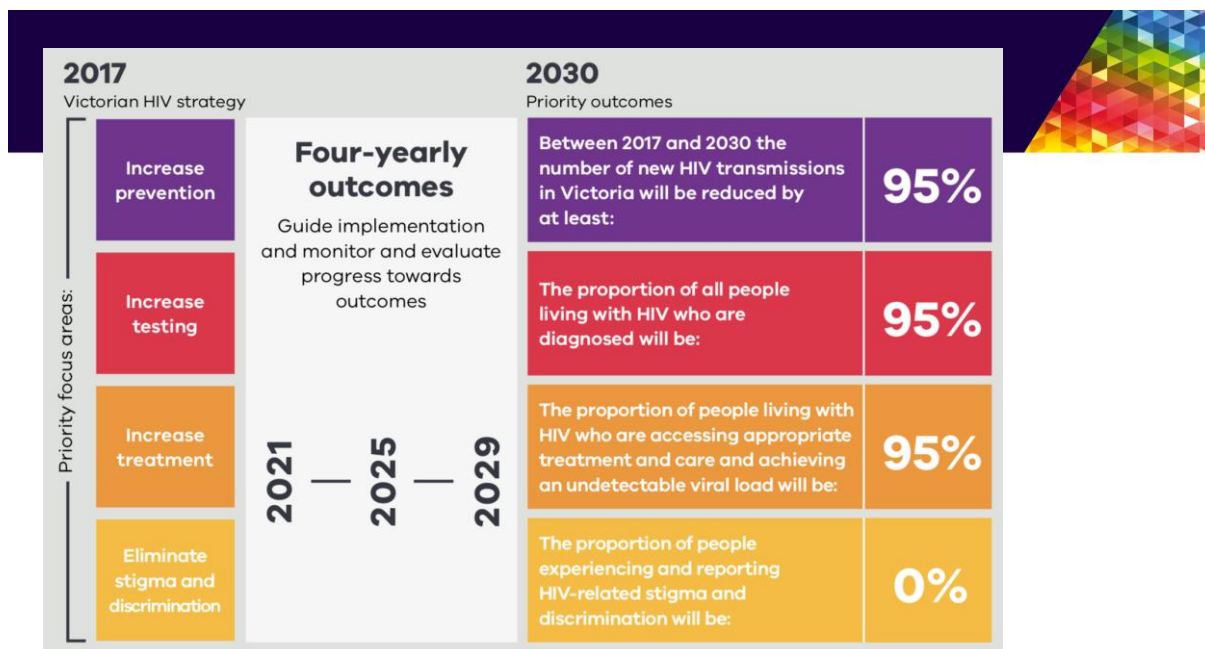
## What are we doing about it?

### **Victorian Government endorsement of U=U**

“As the first Australian jurisdiction to endorse U=U, we want all Victorians to know that HIV treatment works, that it prevents HIV, and that the stigma and discrimination levelled at people living with HIV has no place in Victoria.”

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP  
Minister for Health

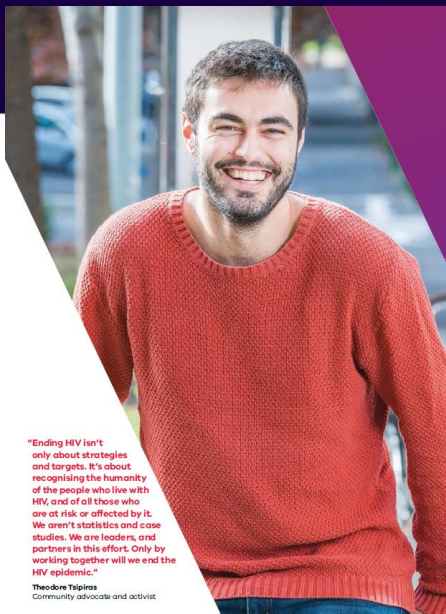




## Challenges

- **Measuring stigma and discrimination**
- **Working outside the normal channels to achieve reform**
- **Intersectionality and diverse priority populations**
- **Ourselves**





**"Ending HIV isn't only about strategies and targets. It's about recognising the humanity of the people who live with HIV, and of all those who are at risk or affected by it. We aren't statistics and case studies. We are leaders, and partners in this effort. Only by working together will we end the HIV epidemic."**

**Theodore Tsipiras**  
Community advocate and activist.

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**We aren't statistics and case studies. We are leaders, and partners in this effort. Only by working together will we end HIV."**

Theodore Tsipiras

## Extraneous bits



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Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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