

# BLOOD SAFETY & VIRAL HEPATITIS EDUCATION

## WHAT

- After a year of negotiations with SA Police Training and Development Branch, Hepatitis SA has successfully implemented blood safety & viral hepatitis training and education sessions to all operational SA Police personnel in an ongoing capacity.
- It is now a SA Police requirement for all operational personal to have received this training, it has been given its own training code and all personal have a 5-year period in which to complete the training.

# S.A. POLICE IN TRAINING

## WHY

- People with a lived experience of a blood-borne virus often face stigma and discrimination in a range of settings, including with the criminal justice system.
- In the past Hepatitis SA Education Team have delivered training and education to SA Police, but this has always been a little ad hoc without any structured coordination.
- With the new SA Police Blood Safety & Viral Hepatitis education package developed by Hepatitis SA in collaboration with SAPOL, this has now changed.
- The training package discusses all things blood-borne viruses including transmission and treatment as well as the laws relating to stigma and discrimination, including the Mandatory Testing Bill which has been in place in SA since 2016.
- These sessions have a SA Police Health Safety & Welfare code attached, with the sessions having an operational focus to engage the officers.

## WHERE AND WHEN

- Training is delivered face-to-face as part of each Local Service Areas training cycle.
- The training can be provided by Hepatitis SA online, however face-to-face is preferred so robust discussions can take place.

## HOW

- Education sessions run for about 40 minutes. Although this is less than ideal for our educational sessions, Hepatitis SA education team have had to roll with it.
- Evaluations are conducted at the beginning and end of each session to gauge participants' increase in general blood-borne virus knowledge as well as attitudinal change to stigma questions. There is also a space for attendees to leave a comment at the completion of the training.

## SO FAR...

- Hepatitis SA are booked to attend two local service area training cycles before the end of 2024, equating to 12 sessions to more than 500 officers.
- Sessions conducted thus far have shown that participants have gained a strong understanding of blood-borne viruses by answering on average 98% or higher on knowledge based questions such as, 'Is there a vaccination for hepatitis B?' and 'Is there a treatment to cure hepatitis C?'
- Participants have also shown a strong understanding of potential stigma and discrimination, with over 80% answering "no" to 'Should you ask someone if they are living with a blood-borne virus', and "yes" to 'Is it illegal to discriminate against someone living with a blood-borne virus?'
- Some comments from participants include 'Very well presented and gave information relevant to our field', 'Very thorough, good factual information', and 'The presenter was very conversant with the subject matter'.