



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

## **World AIDS Day marked by fresh commitment to end HIV transmission**

The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations has warmly welcomed new commitments from the Commonwealth Government to drive the end of Australian HIV transmission, along with renewed affirmation of Australia's multi-decade, bipartisan HIV response.

At today's World AIDS Day Parliamentary Breakfast, the Health Minister, the Hon. Greg Hunt MP, marked the 40th anniversary of AIDS by announcing a new investment of \$39m to provide HIV treatment for people ineligible for Medicare a change the National Association of People Living with HIV Australia (NAPWHA) and AFAO have been calling for.

Providing treatment for people living with HIV in Australia who do not have access to Medicare is not only healthier for those individuals, but also important to Australia's public health response and to achieving lower rates of HIV transmission in Australia.

"This is great news for this highly vulnerable group," NAPWHA President Scott Harlum said.

"HIV positive people without access to Medicare will no longer have to rely on personal importation, drug trials or compassionate access arrangements to maintain their health."

Equitable access to HIV treatments for everyone in Australia is not only necessary for the long-term health of the individual, but also to Australia's commitment to meeting the UN AIDS 95-95-95 targets (95% of people knowing their HIV status, 95% on treatment, and 95% having an undetectable viral load) and to achieve the virtual elimination of HIV transmissions.

The Health Minister also announced \$11m for the continued work of peak HIV organisations and reconfirmed the Government's commitment to Agenda 2025, a plan developed to end HIV transmission by mid-decade.

"We are heartened by the Minister's commitment to end HIV transmission by 2025," said Darryl O'Donnell, CEO of the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations. "Today's announcements will make HIV treatment available to all who need it and allow the broader HIV response to continue."

"The Minister's warm support for Agenda 2025 leaves us hopeful the Government will fully commit to its implementation through a pre-election Budget."

Mr O'Donnell also thanked Labor and the Greens for their ongoing commitment to ending HIV transmission. "Labor's affirmation of the bipartisan response to HIV, along with the Greens' wholehearted support for Agenda 2025 mean we are well placed to continue making progress. This year we commenced a fifth decade of HIV. But with support and resources we are confident we won't enter a sixth decade of the epidemic."

Mr O'Donnell said the forthcoming replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria would come at a crucial moment. The replenishment conference will be held in the United States in the second half of 2022.

"The COVID pandemic has played havoc with the international HIV response, disrupting treatment and prevention efforts and diverting resources. For the first time in its 20 year history, the Global Fund has reported a slide in some indicators of progress. However, 2022 offers new opportunity to properly fund and support the global HIV response and make sure it stays on track."

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