

26 October 2022

This briefing outlines measures announced in the Australian Government's 2022-23 Budget, handed down 25 October 2022. This budget takes the form of a 'mini-budget', providing the new Labor Government with an opportunity to propose allocations that will deliver on its election commitments. Labor's first full budget will be handed down next year, usually in May.

We highlight from the 25 October budget those measures that will be of particular interest to AFAO's communities on HIV and LGBTIQ health. The briefing draws on Treasury papers as well as analysis from other peak organisations. The 2022-23 budget papers can be viewed in full [here](#). This budget can be viewed in conjunction with the [2021-22 budget](#).

## Key points

- The Australian Government is investing \$5.9 million to renewing Australia's efforts to end HIV transmission, \$37.5 million to support the care of people living with HIV who are not eligible for Medicare and \$1.3 million to support the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people.
- The budget addresses a wide range of issues affecting our communities more broadly, including older people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- The budget strengthens Australia's commitment to public health with funding to address monkeypox (MPX), reduce the cost of medication, improve mental health outcomes and undertake preparatory work to establish an Australian Centre for Disease Control.

## *The budget commits to restore AFAO and NAPWHA's funding and invests in initiatives to end HIV transmission.*

The initiatives below are directly related to the work of the HIV sector and AFAO itself. Additionally, community organisations such as AFAO will benefit from \$560 million over the next four years to provide partial indexation of grants.

### 1. Additional funding to peak HIV community organisations

**Investment:** \$5.6 million over 4 years from 2022-23

**Impact:** Enables peak bodies to provide targeted information to hard-to-reach groups and advice to Government on HIV and other emerging issues. This helps restore AFAO and NAPWHA's funding. It will be offset quickly if other one-off grants are not renewed. AFAO and NAPWHA are in continuing discussions with the Government to ensure this welcome new investment achieves the restoration of funding that is intended. Our media statement issued following the budget states:

*The Government has also taken the first steps to restore the funding of AFAO and the National Association of People with HIV Australia (NAPWHA) which lead Australia's effort to end HIV transmission and promote the health of people with HIV.*

*"The Government has signalled through this budget it is serious about progress on HIV. We've worked closely with the Minister while in Opposition and now in Government to share the evidence on what Australia can achieve on HIV.*

*“We’re encouraged that the Government is stepping up its response and its partnership with us.*

*“With the right effort, Australia can achieve something that would have seemed astounding as recently as a decade ago, virtual elimination of HIV transmission,” Mr O’Donnell said.*

## **2. Taskforce to end HIV transmission**

**Investment:** Nil

**Impact:** Establishes a taskforce to provide advice to the Minister for Health and Aged Care on how governments, community organisations and the health sector can work together to end HIV transmission. Our media statement states:

*AFAO also welcomed Minister Butler’s announcement of an expert taskforce to get Australia on track to end HIV transmission. Reporting directly to the Minister, the taskforce will be charged with removing bottlenecks and driving progress to end HIV transmission.*

## **3. Development of a pilot of peer-led contact tracing and wrap around clinical and peer support at diagnosis**

**Investment:** \$300,000 in 2022-23

**Impact:** Funds a pilot peer contact tracing to reduce undiagnosed HIV in the community. The project will also explore models of wrap around clinical and peer support at the time of HIV diagnosis.

## **4. Access to HIV treatment for people who are not eligible for Medicare**

**Investment:** \$37.5 million over three years from 2023-2024

**Impact:** Provides funding to support the provision of HIV treatment to people living with HIV in Australia who are not eligible for Medicare.

## ***The budget includes initiatives that will support our communities.***

The budget includes a range of measures that will be welcomed by our communities as well as Australians more broadly. We outline three below. Additionally, we acknowledge there has been a long overdue increase to the Disability Support Pension, Age Pension and other welfare measures. Information about specific measures in the health portfolio can be viewed [here](#) and for the Social Services portfolio [here](#).

## **1. Consultations with LGBTIQ+ people**

**Investment:** \$1.3 million over two years from 2022-2023

**Impact:** Funds peak organisations to lead consultations on LGBTIQ+ health, including \$220,000 to AFAO to explore the barriers facing LGBTIQ+ communities when accessing healthcare and to develop options to provide better access to appropriate healthcare for these communities. We understand this investment also includes welcome funding for LGBTIQ Health Australia to lead consultations and co-design with the Government a plan to address the health inequities experienced by LGBTIQ+ Australians. An allocation has also been made to support the work of QLife. Our media statement states:

*Last night’s Budget provides welcome funding for peak organisations to lead consultations on LGBTIQ+ health. This includes \$220,000 to AFAO to explore the barriers facing LGBTIQ+ communities when accessing healthcare and options to provide better access to appropriate healthcare for these communities.*

*AFAO CEO, Darryl O’Donnell, welcomed the initiative.*

*“More than four in five young LGBTQA+ people report high levels of psychological distress, while one in ten have attempted suicide in the past year. We have made important strides in supporting the health of LGBTIQ people, but there is nonetheless a continuing crisis.*

*“LGBTIQ-led health organisations can do so much more if they are properly resourced with secure funding. This is an important step forward and we look forward to partnering with the Government to build a robust primary health option for communities that really need it”*

## 2. Older people in aged care

**Investment:** \$3.9 billion over four years from 2022-23

**Impact:** Strengthens safety, dignity and quality of aged care with investments to implement reforms that meet the needs of recipients. This will improve health outcomes of older people in our communities, including people with HIV and LGBTIQ people, especially those who lack family support.

## 3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

**Investment:** \$314.5 million over four years from 2022-23

**Impact:** Improves health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations by training up to 500 First Nations health workers and building First Nations health infrastructure projects.

This is one of a range of measures, including funding for important new partnerships between the Government and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO).

## *The budget strengthens Australia’s commitment to public health.*

The budget includes a range of measures designed to improve Australia’s current and future public health outcomes. Information about further measures can be viewed [here](#).

### 1. MPX funding

**Investment:** \$73.9 million for 2022-23

**Impact:** Responds to the health threat posed by MPX and purchases vaccines and treatments for the National Medical Stockpile to protect Australia against future MPX outbreaks. This includes the third-generation vaccine, JYNNEOS®, which is currently being administered to gay and bisexual men across Australia and anti-viral therapy, Tecovirimat (TPOXX), for people who experience severe reactions to monkeypox infection.

### 2. Pharmaceutical Co-payment

**Investment:** \$787.1m over four years from 2022-23

**Impact:** Reduces the cost of medication on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) such as PrEP, HIV treatment and other medication. From 1 January 2023, non-concessional Medicare card holders will pay \$30 per script instead of \$42.50 and concession card holders will pay \$6.80.

### 3. Mental health and suicide prevention

**Investment:** \$114m over four years from 2022-23

**Impact:** Improves access to services that enhance mental health outcomes and prevent suicide. This includes restoring the loading for Medicare-subsidised online psychiatry consultations and expands the headspace network. Given higher psychological distress and poorer mental health experienced across AFAO’s communities, new investments in this area are welcome.

### 4. Centre for Disease Control (CDC)

**Investment:** \$3.2 million for 2022-23

**Impact:** This funding resources work to develop the initial design of a national body that will support improved pandemic preparedness and monitoring of existing health threats such as HIV and monkeypox. AFAO is working closely with its members and partners to inform our views in the lead-up to these consultations.