

Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee report card 2022-2025

Reporting period 30 March 2022 to 29 March 2025



Message from the Chair

Emeritus Professor Cindy Shannon AM

I am pleased to provide this Report Card on the work of the Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee over the past three years, summarising key areas of focus over the period and identifying challenges and priorities going forward.

Our stakeholder engagement events have contributed to significant achievements for sexual health governance, systems and workforce through investment in the *Queensland Syphilis Action Plan 2023-2028* and the *Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032*. The Committee's impacts demonstrate how a robust governance structure is critical to support strategic advice on sexual health in Queensland.

I express my thanks to all retiring members for their support and work over the last three years, along with the secretariat who have supported this work.

Sector partnerships

66

briefings from Queensland's sexual health sector across 12 quarterly meetings

8

briefings from the Queensland Sexual Health Clinical Network (QSHCN)

12

Blood Borne Virus and Sexually Transmissible Infections (BBVSTI) program briefings from Communicable Diseases Branch (CDB)

6

briefings on BBVSTI and Syphilis matters from Northern and Central Queensland HHSs

7

epidemiology briefings on BBVSTI from Public Health Intelligence Branch (PHI)

4

mpox briefings from PHI and CDB

Priority population perspectives across government and non-government partners with briefings highlighting:

- women of reproductive age including congenital syphilis (26)
- people living in regional, rural, and remote Queensland (24)
- First Nations sexual health (17)
- children and young people's sexual health (15)
- people living with chronic hepatitis including prisoner health (15)
- LGBTIQ+ health (14)
- sexual health workforce (15)
- people living with HIV (9)

Engagement with the Minister and their Office

The Committee provides advice to the **Minister for Health and Ambulance Services** on sexual and reproductive health-related matters aligned to the *Queensland Sexual Health Framework*.

12

occasions on which the Minister or their Advisor have met with the Committee Chair or the Committee



Future

Informed by lived-experience voices, practice-based evidence, epidemiology and research, the Committee identifies future priority areas for Queensland's sexual health sector including:

- Service access in **rural and remote** areas
- **Prisoner health** highlighting prevention of BBVSTI transmission in prisons and into the community
- **Syphilis** prevention and management to support the elimination of congenital syphilis and greater access to testing and treatment particularly for women of reproductive age
- High-quality sexual health **workforce** supported to practice at top-of-scope
- Programs tailored to **engaging with priority underserved populations** including youth and culturally and linguistically diverse communities



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Stakeholder engagement

Forum

Syphilis: Everybody's business



29 May 2023 | 80 delegates

Focus on models of care overcoming healthcare barriers linked to unmet social determinants of health

Impacts include

- Fast-tracked Queensland Syphilis Action Plan development and stakeholder consultation
- Elevated strategic profile leveraged an initial \$1m investment providing 4.3 FTE temporary Nursing / Midwifery positions and supporting a review of the Queensland Syphilis Surveillance Service
- *Queensland Syphilis Action Plan 2023-2028* was launched in February 2024

Roundtable

Queensland Sexual Health Workforce



29 June 2023 | 21 delegates

Explored strategies supporting a sustainable and responsive sexual health workforce now and into the future, addressing identified needs, priorities, barriers and enablers

Impacts include

- Elevated strategic profile leveraged initial \$12.036m investment over four years from 2024-25 through the *Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032 Initiative 3.2.4—Improve and expand public sexual health services*
- Ongoing investment of \$3.050m per annum from 1 July 2028
- Established 14.3 new permanent sexual health workforce positions across the state including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers/Practitioners, Nurses, Midwives, Public Health Officers, Epidemiologist, and Sexual Health physicians

Roundtable

Hepatitis B and C



16 May 2024 | 42 delegates

Explored barriers and enablers in pursuit of Queensland's commitment to the elimination of hepatitis B and C as public health threats by 2030

Impacts include

- Informed the Queensland Hepatitis B Plan 2030 and the Queensland Hepatitis C Plan 2030
- Priority areas identified for future consideration of investment



Sexual Health Research Fund (SHRF)

The Research Subcommittee identified translational research priorities and recommend applications to be awarded grant funds.

The 2023 SHRF governance and process review led to Round 5 enhancements, that:

- achieved a record number of applications
- reached a wider audience of potential applicants
- received a diverse range of novel proposals
- implemented a new application evaluation process
- engaged independent peer reviewers to evaluate applications



Round 4 (2022-23)

\$360k

invested in 4 projects

Round 5 (2023-24)

\$306k

invested in 4 projects

Rounds 1-3 projects generated more than:

30

conference presentations (poster or oral)

28

peer-reviewed journal articles

14

tangible products

9

larger grants or further research projects leveraged

8

stakeholder education sessions

8

instances of direct translation into practice

6

instances of participation in advisory group or steering committee