

Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee

Communiqué

January 2019

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The Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee (Committee) was established to provide advice to the Hon. Steven Miles, Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services on sexual and reproductive health-related matters in the context of the *Queensland Sexual Health Strategy 2016–2021* and associated action plans. The Committee meets quarterly.

North Queensland HIV Roundtable

The Committee hosted a North Queensland HIV Roundtable in Cairns on 17 and 18 October 2017, in response to rising rates of HIV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in North Queensland. The purpose of the Roundtable was to gather information to assist in the development of a framework for the integrated management of HIV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. The *North Queensland HIV Roundtable Report* was approved for release by the Minister on 14 November 2018.

Activity to date

The *North Queensland HIV Framework* has been developed and endorsed by the North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander STI Action Plan Chief Executive Steering Committee on 10 September 2018. The goals of the *North Queensland HIV Framework* are to work with the community to:

- respond to the increasing HIV notifications among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in North Queensland;
- minimise the personal and social impact of HIV; and
- achieve the virtual elimination of new transmissions of HIV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in North Queensland.

A temporary HIV Response Team has been established in Cairns Sexual Health Service as an interim response to the cluster of HIV cases. The team is actively managing clients who have complex care needs and has been successful in engaging people with HIV in treatment and care.

The Communicable Disease Branch, Prevention Division, has funded a temporary North Queensland HIV Project Team (Project Team) based in the Tropical Public Health Service - Cairns. The Project Team will develop the *North Queensland HIV Framework* into a fully costed *North Queensland HIV Action Plan* by 30 June 2019.

A number of groups have been established including:

- the North Queensland HIV Cluster Advisory Group which provides expert clinical and public health advice and guidance to local services involved in the response to the HIV cluster. The group is chaired by Communicable Diseases Branch and has met on four occasions to date;
- the Far North Queensland HIV Outbreak Stakeholder Group which has broad representation from Cairns and Hinterland and Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Services (HHS), Communicable Diseases Branch, non-government organisations and Aboriginal and Islander Community Controlled Health Services. This group provides a forum for stakeholders to share information and identify opportunities to promote collaborative activities, aimed at interrupting transmission of HIV and supporting affected people and communities. The group is chaired by Cairns Sexual Health Service and has met on five occasions to date; and
- a time-limited Far North Queensland HIV Communications Planning Subgroup which has developed a draft communication plan designed to assist with the planning and delivery of consistent positive messaging to key target audiences, linking in with existing campaigns such as the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute's Young Deadly and Free videos and the Queensland Health Stop the Rise of STIs Campaign.

These groups will be consulted in the development of the NQ HIV Action Plan by the Project Team.

Queensland Positive People provides collaborative case management for people with HIV and peer navigator support, and they are progressing plans for a residential workshop to be held in North Queensland in April or May 2019 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with HIV. It's anticipated that the workshop will provide information to inform future activities and models of care.

Queensland AIDS Council are active in North Queensland and were involved in coordinating World AIDS Day activities.

Regular Public Health Alerts are issued jointly by the Tropical Public Health Service and Cairns Sexual Health Service to all clinicians reminding of the need to continue to offer syphilis and HIV testing to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as part of a comprehensive STI screen, treat promptly and undertake contact tracing.

Contact us: SexualHealthStrategy@health.qld.gov.au