

# Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee

Communiqué

November 2018

## Preamble

### Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee

The Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee (Committee) was established to provide advice to the 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 is scheduled to meet quarterly.

### Sexual Health Research Fund and Research Sub-Committee

The Sexual Health Research Fund (SHRF) was established to provide seed funding for translational research activities to improve the delivery of sexual health services in Queensland and support implementation of the *Queensland Sexual Healthy Strategy 2016–2021*. The Research Sub-Committee (a subset of the Committee) was convened to set research priorities and assess and approve research applications.

This communiqué provides an overview of major items discussed at the seventh Committee meeting held on 29 November 2018, and the Research Sub-Committee meeting held on 30 November 2018.

## Committee Meeting Overview

The fifth Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee (Committee) meeting occurred on Thursday 29 November 2018.

The Committee reflected on the stakeholder engagement forum focusing on the sexual and reproductive health needs of young people, which was held in Brisbane on 10 October 2018. The Committee noted the valuable engagement of young people in planning and facilitating the event and the diversity of young people who participated. The report from the forum is expected to be provided to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services in early 2019.

Updates were received by the Committee on the progress of the implementation of the North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sexually Transmissible Infections Action Plan 2016–2021 and progress regarding the management of new cases of HIV in far North Queensland. The Committee was advised of additional investments being made in three North Queensland Hospital and Health Services to increase contact tracing capacity, as

well as resources provided to Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service to develop a North Queensland HIV Action Plan.

The Committee received an epidemiology update from the Department regarding notifications of sexually transmissible infections and blood borne viruses in Queensland. An update was also provided on syphilis in South East Queensland with a focus on women of child-bearing age.

A presentation on healthcare for transgender, gender diverse and non-binary people was provided by Dr Graeme Neilsen, followed by a facilitated discussion of barriers to accessing health care including sex reassignment surgery in Queensland and Australia generally.

The Committee welcomed the announcement on 29 November 2018 of the endorsement by the Federal Health Minister and State and Territory Health Ministers, of the five new National BBV/STI Strategies covering the period 2018-2022.

The Committee were advised that the Department will proceed with further developing a new state-level Sexually Transmissible Infections Action Plan to complement the current Action Plans for HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

The Committee were advised that the Queensland government has signalled its intention to investigate the possible decriminalisation of sex work. The Committee acknowledged that: "... current epidemiological evidence supports full decriminalisation of sex work and removal of mandatory testing for best sexual health outcomes of sex workers, their clients and the wider community".

The Committee were advised that the Therapeutic Goods Administration had approved the first HIV self-test available in Australia - the Atomo Self-Test (fingerprick test).

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for 14 February 2019.

## Research Sub-Committee Meeting Overview

The Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM) were formally awarded the contract to perform the Sexual Health Research Fund administrator functions on behalf of the Department.

Round one priorities for research were confirmed by the Committee as:

1. Syphilis – focus on heterosexual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in North Queensland, Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) in South East Queensland
2. HIV/AIDS neurological decline – focus on improving health care outcomes
3. CALD populations – focus on LGBTIQ young people, qualitative research and analysis of existing data
4. Transgender people – focus on young people transitioning from adolescence to adulthood

The Sub-Committee agreed the following key dates with ASHM for round one:

- Round one opens – 7 December 2018
- Round one closes – 14 January 2019
- Successful and unsuccessful applicants advised – 28 February 2019

- Contracts to be in place for successful applicants – by 30 May 2019

More information and application details can be found at [www.ashm.org.au/programs/qld/](http://www.ashm.org.au/programs/qld/) or via email to [SHRF@ashm.org.au](mailto:SHRF@ashm.org.au).

Contact us: [SexualHealthStrategy@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:SexualHealthStrategy@health.qld.gov.au)