

Dear Supporter

Dear Supporter, this year Territorians have the opportunity to elect a new Territory Government or retain the current Government. This paper is designed to assist our politicians and our community members understand how Government can support people living with blood borne viruses and our priority populations across the NT.

NTAHC VISION

NTAHC is a peak non-government organisation operating across the Northern Territory of Australia, with the support of its stakeholders, community members and board of directors, NTAHC is working towards a world that strengthens and sustains people affected by blood borne viruses. NTAHC coordinates several funded peer-led programs including a Harm Reduction program that delivers a Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) service across the Northern Territory of Australia and a Sex Worker Outreach Program (SWOP) that supports people who are sex workers. In addition to these important services, NTAHC also offers a care and support program for people living with blood borne viruses and is expanding to meet the diverse needs of LGBTI people living in the NT through innovative and focused projects focused on addressing gaps in health service delivery. NTAHC celebrates peers and people with lived experiences as experts and ensures all programs are delivered with ongoing consultation and community engagement.

What We Need

How Our Government Can Help

Actions and Timeline

Independent Audit of use of mandatory testing legislation within the Police Amendment Act 2016

Division 7AA of the Police Administration Amendment Act 2016 outlines two differentiated systems to enable forced HIV testing of a person whose bodily fluids come into contact with police and/or emergency service personnel. Since this inclusion in 2016, NTAHC, along with its national peak member organisations has raised a number of public health concerns re. mandatory testing. NTAHC seeks a commitment to an independent audit of 'disease test approvals' initiated under the Act to better understand the impact on marginalised Territorians. Following the audit NTAHC strongly suggests the NT Government to amend the Act to remove Division 7AA or at least ensure it is ordered under the instruction of an informed Magistrate.

- First 100 days initiate an audit of use of Division 7AA of the Police Amendment Act
- End 2020 consider recommendations by peak health organisations to remove Division 7AA
- End 2020 initiate mandatory training for all Police regarding blood borne virus exposure, safe management of body fluids and stigma and discrimination

Urgent removal of any provisions within legislation which discriminates or may lead to discrimination. Modernise the Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act and ratify a Charter of Human Rights

In 2019 The NT passed a bill decriminalising the NT sex services industry. The 2019 Bill provides sex workers with the industrial protections afforded to all other NT professions and prioritises safe working conditions. Urgent reform of the current Anti-Discrimination Act to ensure 'sex workers and 'sex work' are ratified as "protected attributes under the Act and the Act include "protections against vilification" to ensure all industry workers are fully protected by Anti-Discrimination laws as intended by the Sex Industry Bill 2019. The current act must also be amended to include "protections against vilification" under the basis of gender identity, intersex status, sexual orientation and HIV/AIDS.

- First 100 days publish submissions from 2018 discussion paper 'Modernisation of the NT Discrimination Act' and publish exposure draft
- Ensure 'sex work' and 'sex worker' protections against vilification are included as protected attributes
- Ensure all recommendations from relevant community organisations are included
- End 2020 pass the modernisation of the Anti-Discrimination Act into law.
- Following submission by end 2021 develop a Charter of Human Rights to support the modernised Anti-Discrimination Act

Ensure the Sex Industry Act 2019 is implemented across the NT

The Sex Industry Act 2019 decriminalises sex work in the Northern Territory. To ensure the Act and its intention is upheld, there are a number of actions required by the Northern Territory Government. These include expungement of Sex Work Industry private registration information and spent convictions under the previous Act. Work, Health and Safety Guidelines to support industry will ensure workers' rights are upheld inline with all intersecting regulations and legislation. In order to disseminate the changes, SWOP NT requires adequate resources and additional funding to provide peer education across industry. There is a need to upskill service providers within health, justice and social services through sex industry awareness training and to ensure stakeholders understand newly implemented decriminalisation laws.

- August 2020 Expunge Sexwork Industry Registration information
- End 2020 Draft instrument to expunge spent convictions
- Mid 2021 Pass spent convictions intersection from period PRA 1992
- Adequately resource SWOP NT to provide essential education and training across relevant health, social service and emergency service sectors

What We Need

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Actions and Timeline

Build capacity of mainstream health and mental health services to support LGBTI people and people living with blood borne viruses

Capacity building of the health workforce to facilitate referral pathways into inclusive and responsive mainstream services that meet the needs of people living with blood borne viruses and the LGBTI community, specifically psychological services and primary health care services. Unlike other states and territories, the NT has very few mainstream services that are accessible to NTAHC's priority populations. LGBTI people and people living with BBVs in the NT experience high rates of stigma and discrimination resulting in an ongoing poor psychosocial health .

- First 100 days resource NTAHC to develop a training and education package to upskill mainstream health providers who deliver services to LGBTI people
- By end 2020 provide resourcing for an NT LGBTI education coordinator to evaluate all training delivered to health providers through territory funded initiatives

Improve Harm Reduction services across the NT

Provide an exemption to scheduling for the NTAHC Primary harm reduction sites to supply Naloxone directly to clients. Limited access is currently a significant barrier to Naloxone access for people who inject drugs (PWID). Naloxone is recognised as a safe lifesaving drug with no abuse potential. Naloxone has been de-scheduled in British Columbia, Canada in response to their opioid overdose crisis and recently an exemption has been granted to the Queensland Injectors Health Network (QIHN) by the Queensland State Government. In order to provide harm minimisation and health messaging to vulnerable clients including people with disability and people experiencing poor mental health, NTAHC requires funding to deliver a Mobile Outreach service for PWID.

- First 100 days resource a steering group to review Naloxone provision across Australia and the NT
- Enact exemptions to ensure provision of Naloxone via Primary Needle and Syringe Outlets to save lives
- Mid 2021 resource steering committee to review distribution and consider additional outlets including harm reduction outreach services
- End 2021 fund NTAHC to provide much needed outreach services to people living with disability in the community

Provide support for a counselling and wellness service to address the needs of LGBTI Territorians

Provide support for an inclusive counselling service within NTAHC that strengthens and supports vulnerable communities excluded from mainstream services. Conclusive results across an extensive range of national and Territorian wide studies indicate trans people and people from the broader LGBTI community experience adverse mental health issues such as depression and anxiety at far higher rates than the general population. LGBTI people are also identified as being at increased risk for suicide and self-harm. In the NT we currently have no identified LGBTI inclusive mental health service providers. NTAHC requires funding to offer a client led counselling service that addresses the needs of LGBTI Territorians.

- End 2020 provide funding to support an LGBTI inclusive psychologist

Review Department of Corrections Trans and Gender Diverse Prisoners Policy

In 2020 the Trans and Gender Diverse Prisoner policy was updated to reflect the understanding that not only are transgender people at far greater risk of violence but transgender inmates experience disproportionately high rates of sexual assault and self-harm when compared to other prison populations. The current policy requires review by an independent advisory group comprised of NT sistergirl and brother boy community representatives. Recommendations from the advisory group must be implemented and additional provisions included with the modernised Anti-Discrimination Act to ensure cultural safety of incarcerated trans and gender diverse people.

- Mid 2021 adequately resource advisory group tasked with reviewing current policy
- Consider all recommendations by advisory group
- End 2021 implement all recommendations of advisory group and ratify updated Trans and Gender Diverse Prisoner Policy
- End 2021 ratify modernisation of Anti-Discrimination Act to ensure cultural safety of incarcerated trans and gender diverse people