

MEDIA RELEASE

VAC AND LIVING POSITIVE VICTORIA ANNOUNCE JOINT ELECTION PLATFORM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

14 JULY 2014 – In the lead up to the 2014 International AIDS Conference in Melbourne, the Victorian AIDS Council (VAC) and Living Positive Victoria are releasing their joint election platform to politicians, key stakeholders and the general public on Monday 14 July 2014. This document outlines actions that VAC and Living Positive Victoria believe the next Victorian government should consider in order to address the HIV epidemic in Victoria.

While it's been 30 years since the first HIV notification in Australia, there are areas of Victoria's public policy and law that do not effectively address the epidemic in this state.

On Monday 7 July 2014, the National Government released *The Seventh National HIV Strategy 2014-2017*. This strategy announced two major reforms, the removal of the ban on self-testing devices in Australia as well as the expansion of the availability on HIV treatment into community pharmacies. Both VAC and Living Positive Victoria recognise the importance of these two reforms as critical to improving Australia's response to the epidemic.

The joint election platform document provides decision makers with a clear set of specific actions that both VAC and Living Positive Victoria agree will guide the next Victorian Government toward ensuring the state's highly respected response to HIV continues.

"It's important, as we move into a new phase of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, with improved treatment, testing and prevention technologies, that our regulatory and policy frameworks strengthen our response into the future," said Greg Carter, VAC President.

Living Positive Victoria President, Ian Muchamore, concurred, saying, "Our work can be strengthened by a policy framework that removes barriers to testing and treatment, works to end stigma and homophobia and provides a way forward with regard to enhancing the health and wellbeing of our community."

We encourage the media as well as the broader community to familiarise themselves with the joint election platform document and give it due consideration as we head into the state election on 29 November 2014.

ENDS

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