

# Eliminate Hepatitis C Australia Partnership

## Background

### **We have the chance to eliminate hepatitis C from Australia.**

Australia is a world leader in the quest to eliminate hepatitis C as a public health threat by 2030, building on partnerships between government, civil society, health professionals and researchers.

Unrestricted access to direct-acting antivirals (DAAs) with specialists, general practitioners and nurse practitioners all able to prescribe curative hepatitis C treatment is a game changer.

DAA therapy has revolutionised hepatitis C care, the medications are safe, highly effective (95 per cent cure rate) and require one tablet daily over 8-12 weeks.

When treatment is combined with harm reduction and universal access to testing, it means hepatitis C elimination in Australia becomes an achievable goal. However, there is much work to be done.

Since the DAAs were listed on the PBS in March 2016, over 50,000 people across Australia have been treated, around 26 per cent of all people living with hepatitis C.

However, the number of people commencing treatment is falling, putting Australia at risk of missing its elimination targets.

It is vital that high treatment numbers are maintained to stop new hepatitis C infections and hepatitis C-related deaths.

### **To make this happen requires:**

- Awareness that cure is possible
- Making testing for hepatitis C easier
- Making it easy for people to get treated and cured
- Working to prevent new hepatitis C infections.

Burnet Institute, with support from the Paul Ramsay Foundation, is bringing together researchers, implementation scientists, government, health services and community organisations to ensure Australia sustains high numbers of people accessing hepatitis C treatment to meet our elimination targets.

## Aims of EC Australia

The overarching goal of EC Australia is to eliminate hepatitis C as a public health threat by 2030.

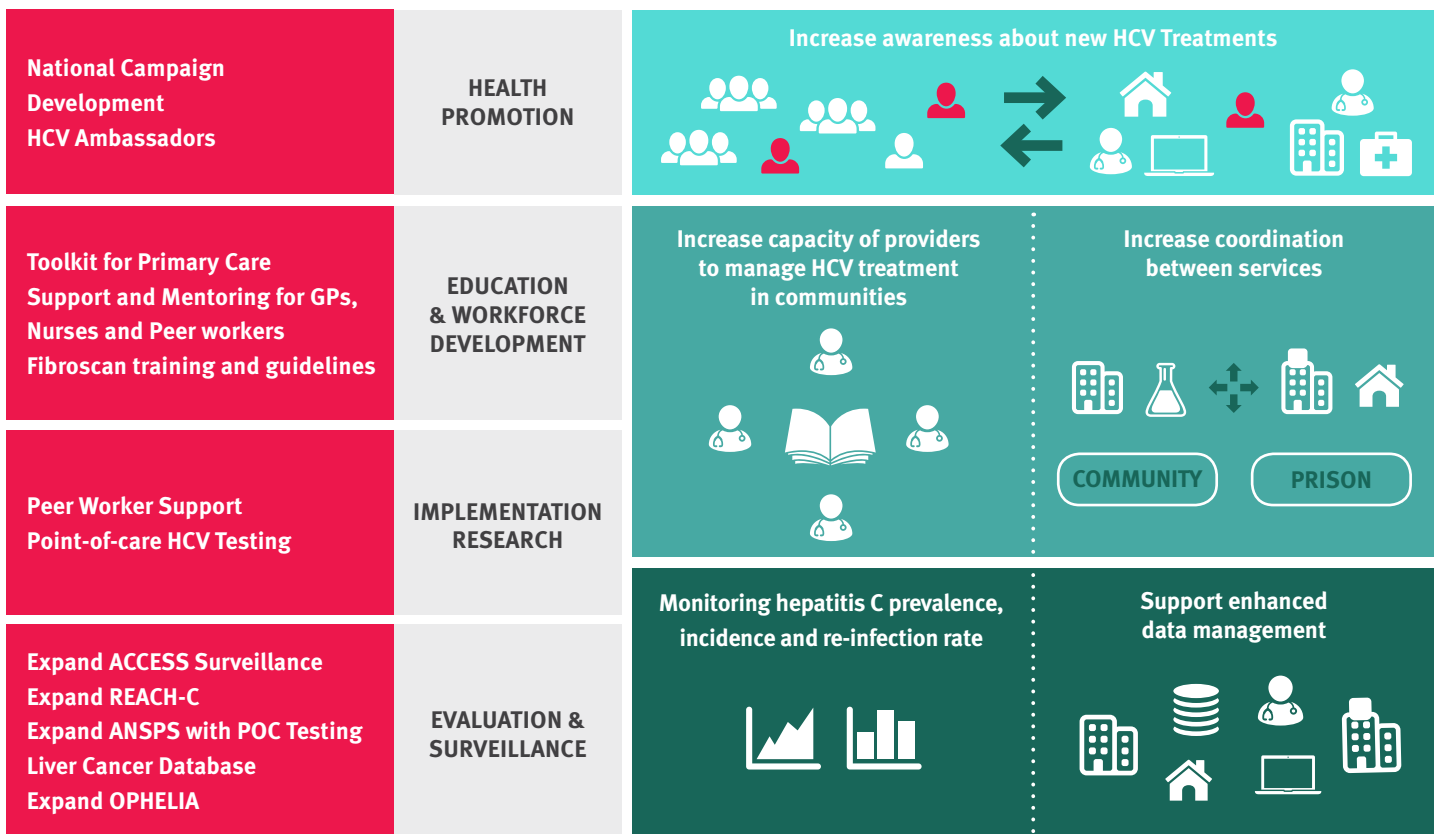
Eliminating hepatitis C will stop people becoming infected with hepatitis C and stop hepatitis C-related deaths. The Australian public will benefit more broadly from the health system savings that will occur through a targeted and cohesive approach to hepatitis C testing and treatment.

### **The specific goals of EC Australia are to:**

- Ensure that 15,000 Australians with chronic hepatitis C are treated and cured of their infection annually
- Ensure that people identified with cirrhosis related to hepatitis C infection are treated and cured, and regularly reviewed to monitor for liver cancer
- Establish a national collaborative framework to facilitate a coordinated response to the elimination of hepatitis C as a public health threat from Australia by 2030.

## EC Australia has four key components

1. Health promotion/awareness raising;
2. Education and workforce development in primary care services;
3. Implementation research;
4. Evaluation and surveillance.



## Outcomes of EC Australia

### Key outcomes over the next three years:

Treating 15,000 Australians for hepatitis C annually, including people who inject drugs to reduce ongoing virus transmission, people with severe liver scarring to reduce hepatitis C liver related deaths, and people with moderate liver scarring to prevent liver disease and cancer.

The establishment of a self-sustaining funding model in primary care clinics to enable hepatitis C treatment scale-up in every Australian jurisdiction.

An annual hepatitis C Elimination Progress Report to measure progress towards the World Health Organization hepatitis C elimination targets, including the hepatitis C care cascades for every Australian jurisdiction.

## Timelines

EC Australia will be funded for three years. The long-term vision is to eliminate hepatitis C as a public health threat in Australia by 2030.

We anticipate the results of EC Australia will inform government policy, including supporting the Australian National Hepatitis C Strategy and its goal for Australia to be one of the first countries to eliminate hepatitis C as a public health threat.

