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The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations has welcomed new Budget funding that lays important foundations for expanding LGBTIQ health services and accelerating the end of HIV transmission in Australia.

Last night's Budget provides welcome funding for peak organisations to lead consultations on LGBTIQ+ health. This includes \$220,000 to AFAO to explore the barriers facing LGBTIQ+ communities when accessing healthcare and options to provide better access to appropriate healthcare for these communities.

AFAO CEO, Darryl O'Donnell, welcomed the initiative.

"More than four in five young LGBTQA+ people report high levels of psychological distress, while one in ten have attempted suicide in the past year. We have made important strides in supporting the health of LGBTIQ people, but there is nonetheless a continuing crisis.

"LGBTIQ-led health organisations can do so much more if they are properly resourced with secure funding. This is an important step forward and we look forward to partnering with the Government to build a robust primary health option for communities that really need it."

AFAO also welcomed Minister Butler's announcement of an expert taskforce to get Australia on track to end HIV transmission. Reporting directly to the Minister, the taskforce will be charged with removing bottlenecks and driving progress to end HIV transmission.

The budget includes renewed HIV funding, including for a pilot program for peer led contract tracing and expanded clinical and counselling support for people newly diagnosed with HIV.

The Government has also taken the first steps to restore the funding of AFAO and the National Association of People with HIV Australia (NAPWHA) which lead Australia's effort to end HIV transmission and promote the health of people with HIV.

"The Government has signalled through this budget it is serious about progress on HIV. We've worked closely with the Minister while in Opposition and now in Government to share the evidence on what Australia can achieve on HIV.

"We're encouraged that the Government is stepping up its response and its partnership with us.

“With the right effort, Australia can achieve something that would have seemed astounding as recently as a decade ago, virtual elimination of HIV transmission,” Mr O’Donnell said.

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