

Australian Priority Statement: With concerted action we can find a cure for hepatitis B

Centering people living with hepatitis B, a [Community Forum](#) opened the recent [International Hepatitis B Meeting](#) 2023.

This is the first time since 2019 that this significant international meeting has been held in the Western Pacific Region, which has the greatest burden of hepatitis B in the world. The meeting created major opportunities to progress research towards a cure for hepatitis B and to call for more action to achieve [global and domestic hepatitis B elimination commitments](#).

[Globally hepatitis B affects approximately 296 million people](#), including over 6 million children under the age of 5. The Western Pacific Region is the most affected region in the world and with an estimated 116 million people living with hepatitis B.

The Community Forum was strong in its calls to prioritise hepatitis B cure, tackle stigma and discrimination, elevate the voices of people with lived experience and achieve elimination by 2030.

The [scientific world is moving closer than ever to developing a cure for hepatitis B](#), and with it the possibility of preventing [470,000 annual deaths](#) from hepatitis B in the Western Pacific Region.

With the right investments and by maintaining momentum, equitable, affordable and universal access to hepatitis B cure can be achieved by 2030.

Enshrined in national policy, endorsed by all Australian Health Ministers, Australia has committed to eliminating hepatitis B as a public health concern and to achieving the 2030 elimination targets.

[Australia](#) recognises that it has a role to play as leaders in hepatitis B elimination internationally, and specifically in the Western Pacific Region. Australia also recognises that [globally an estimated that 1,500 deaths per day are attributable to viral hepatitis, a higher mortality rate than HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined](#).

[Australia's new National Hepatitis B Strategy 2023-2030](#), which is in the finalisation stage, recognises that researching and developing cures for chronic hepatitis B would save many millions of lives globally and help ensure the elimination of hepatitis B by 2030. Australia has some of the best hepatitis B scientists in the world and has been a leader in galvanising global action to find a cure.

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Australian priorities for action

- 1 Drive and maintain national action** by finalising and making publicly available the National Hepatitis B Strategy 2023-2030 by the end of 2023.

- 2 Help find a cure for hepatitis B** by implementing the National Hepatitis B Strategy 2023-2030 Key Area for Action 8.6.14: *Ensure Australia is at the fore of hepatitis B research innovations, including through expanding a focus on hepatitis B research in existing Australian Government research funding such as the Medical Research Future Fund and NHMRC. This includes prioritising research into hepatitis B cures and development of targeted treatments, including direct acting antivirals and immunotherapeutic approaches.*

- 3 Ensure people affected by hepatitis B drive the national response** by implementing the National Hepatitis B Strategy 2023-2030 Key Area for Action 8.4.1: *Implement, maintain, and strengthen a national hepatitis B-specific community workforce including peer workers. Implement associated projects and supports including workforce development/training, supervision, communities of practice, scopes of practice and capacity building.*

- 4 Ensure rapid, equitable and affordable uptake of curative treatments** by implementing the National Hepatitis B Strategy 2023-2030 Key Area for Action 8.2.10: *Prepare for the rollout of curative treatments for chronic hepatitis B by undertaking implementation projects, in collaboration with community, to design and prepare systems, workforces, and policy settings.*

This statement was developed by Australian delegates, including from the [Australian Centre for Hepatitis Virology](#), [the Doherty Institute](#) and [Hepatitis Australia](#), who attended the International Hepatitis B Meeting 2023 Community Forum which was organised by the [Hepatitis B Foundation](#) and [ICE-HBV](#), and endorsed by [hepBcommunity.org](#) and [Hepatitis Australia](#).