|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  **MEDIA RELEASE**  | **21 AUGUST 2019** |  **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** |

**IMAGINING HIV IN 2030: EXPLORING POSSIBLE FUTURES
AND CHARTING A PATH FORWARD**

What does HIV look like in 2030? How do we make sure people living with HIV age healthily and well? What needs to be done so that everyone benefits equally from NSW’s leading HIV response? These are some of the issues explored in a new discussion paper developed by ACON, NSW’s leading HIV and sexuality and gender diverse health organisation.

*Imagining HIV in 2030* speculates about possible futures over the next decade, examining how current trends and future developments will impact the HIV landscape in NSW. In doing so, it delves into what needs to be done to ensure community, sector and government responses to HIV prevention, treatment and support in NSW remain on course.

“In the early 1980s, our communities were confronted with the devastation of the HIV crisis,” said ACON CEO Nicolas Parkhill.

“But in the face of death and fear, gay men mobilised and took action, as did other affected groups such as sex workers and people who injected drugs. United in this journey were researchers, scientists, clinicians and policymakers, all of whom bravely took up the fight against HIV and AIDS.

“Against that background, it is remarkable that in 2018, NSW recorded the lowest rate of new HIV notifications since surveillance began. HIV diagnoses continues to decline overall, HIV testing rates are at an all-time high and more people living with HIV are on treatment than ever before,” Parkhill said.

“That we should make such tremendous progress is a testament to the strong partnership that exists between government, community and the HIV sector in NSW. This partnership – steeped in cooperation, collaboration and unwavering commitment – forms the foundation of the NSW’s HIV response, and will steer the future of HIV and its impact in our communities.

“With this paper, we want to explore what the future might look like for HIV in NSW. What changes need to be made? What are the issues that still need to be addressed? What do we need to do to create public health history?

“By releasing this paper, we hope to kick-start this conversation,” Parkhill added.“*Imagining HIV in 2030* is rare opportunity to reflect on how far we have come. Importantly, it is also a call to action to keep up the momentum in our progress and ensure all in our communities can benefit from the ongoing developments and advances in HIV prevention, treatment and care.”

*Imagining HIV in 2030* was launched at a community forum at the Eternity Playhouse in Darlinghurst on Tuesday 20 August. Over 200 people heard from a panel discussion hosted by writer Benjamin Law and a range of researchers and health experts including NSW Chief Health Officer Dr Kerry Chant, Kirby Institute Director Professor Anthony Kelleher, Kirby Institute researcher Dr Ben Bavinton, Dr Horas Wong from the Centre for Social Research in Health and Positive Life NSW’s Lance Feeney.

“We thank the NSW government for its commitment in leading the way for a contemporary Australian response to HIV, and the ongoing advocacy and dedicated work of our sector partners,” Parkhill added. “We particularly acknowledge people in our communities – gay men and men who have sex with men – who have consistently demonstrated they’re committed to ending HIV transmissions in NSW. Our collective success is really their success.”

**Read *Imagining HIV in 2030* Discussion Paper** [**here**](https://www.acon.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Imagining-HIV-in-2030-Discussion-Paper-Spreads.pdf)**.**