

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE LISTING OF DIRECT ACTING ANTIVIRALS (DAAs) ON THE PBS

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Hepatitis NSW marked a milestone that has profoundly shaped the successful NSW drive to eliminate hepatitis C as public health issue on Thursday, 19 March 2026. The event celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the listing of direct acting antivirals (DAAs) on the PBS.

Reflections on achievements of 10 years of hepatitis C cure include:

- Hepatitis C in Australia has decreased by 58% since 2015
- More than 100,000 Australians have received curative hepatitis C treatments.
- Current hepatitis C infection among people attending needle and syringe programs has declined from 51% in 2015 to 12% in 2023.

Since listing in 2016, many thousands of people in NSW have been cured of hepatitis C. In addition, we have seen a significant drop in the prevalence and incidence of hepatitis C, especially in at-risk population groups.

- Between 2016 and 2024, 38,598 people commenced treatment in NSW.
- This represents \$106.8 million saved in avoided healthcare costs
- This has greatly improved the health outcomes of people previously living with hepatitis C.

A feature of the event was the release of a series of video vox pops from people with lived experience of hepatitis C and DAA treatment, community members and leaders, health professionals, policy makers, allies and supporters reflecting on the campaign for, the achievement of, and impact of PBS listing of ‘gamechanger’ DAAs in 2016.

These videos will form a social media campaign promoting the efficacy and availability of hepatitis C treatment and cure. The campaign aims to create a fresh and renewed impetus to efforts in eliminating hepatitis C by 2030.

#### **Background**

On 1 March 2016, DAAs were listed on the PBS and made universally available in Australia, ensuring all individuals could access these breakthrough therapies without restrictions on treatment history or liver disease stage. Sussan Ley MP was the Minister for Health at the time.

The PBS listing was the culmination of the Hepatitis NSW led advocacy efforts commencing in 2014 and taken up nationally by Hepatitis Australia. This included the *Equal Treatment Access* campaign, aimed at ensuring all individuals could access these breakthrough therapies without restrictions on treatment history or liver disease stage. Central to this campaign was the Hepatitis NSW “C me” community advocates and the many affected individuals who supported the campaign through petitions, submissions parliamentary engagement, media appearances and public testimony.

This was achieved due to the vital role at community organisations, people with lived experience, health care professionals, researchers, other sector partners in advocating, representing, and agitating for easily available and universal access to hepatitis C testing, treatment therapies, and care.

As a result, we have a changing landscape of hepatitis C and what can be – and has been – achieved in Australia through the determined efforts of community, health care professionals, researchers, and government working in partnership guided by continuously evolving national strategies ( 2026 -2030 strategies soon to be released) and bi-partisan support.