

# **WE BELONG TOGETHER: GETTING POLICY MAKERS ENGAGED IN THE GENERATION AND USE OF BBV AND STI RESEARCH IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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## **Background/Purpose:**

Research has a critical role in effective program and policy development and in reducing health inequities. The engagement of policy-makers in the development and dissemination of research has been shown to increase the use of research in policy and program development.

## **Approach:**

The Blood Borne Virus (BBV) & Sexually Transmissible Infections (STI) Research, Intervention and Strategic Evaluation program (BRISE) is a university-based priority research initiative that delivers high quality, policy-relevant research, strategic advice, capacity building and communications to support the BBV and STI response in NSW. Strategies for increasing policy-maker engagement included close collaboration between researchers and policy-makers, the distribution of research syntheses to a range of audiences, and to strengthen health workforce capacity to better use research in program design.

## **Outcomes/Impact:**

Collaborative input into the BRISE annual work plan by policy-makers and other stakeholders, including health practitioners and the community, helped ensure research was mutually beneficial and had the best possible chance of being translated into policy and practice. Ministry of Health officers also managed projects jointly with BRISE researchers enabling meaningful policy-maker involvement from inception to application and supporting an improved understanding of the research process. BRISE research findings were disseminated through a wide range of platforms including reports, webinars, seminars and the BRISE website, and use of plain English was encouraged to maximise accessibility.

## **Innovation and Significance:**

BRISE has been an effective approach to foster collaboration between researchers and policy-makers and produce critical evidence to address policy and practice gaps in the population response to BBVs and STIs in NSW.

## **Disclosure of Interest Statement**

Nil