



Media Release: On World Hepatitis Day Australia glows green to help find people living with viral hepatitis

Canberra, Australia - 28 July 2023

World Hepatitis Day brings into focus Australia's commitment to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030. Health advocates in Australia assert that eliminating viral hepatitis is achievable if governments ramp up efforts.

"Australia is at a pivotal juncture in the fight against viral hepatitis," says Hepatitis Australia CEO Carrie Fowlie. "We have effective and affordable solutions, such as a cure for hepatitis C and a vaccine and treatments for hepatitis B. The challenge lies in getting these medicines to everyone who needs them. Without proper treatment, hepatitis B and C can cause liver disease and liver cancer – the fastest-growing cause of cancer deaths in Australia."

"Positive strides have been made in treatment uptake. By the end of 2020, nearly half of all people living with hepatitis C in the Australia had started curative antiviral treatment. However, recently treatment uptake has slowed significantly, with just 7% of people living with hepatitis C beginning treatment in the last year of counting," says Ms Fowlie.

"Similarly, only 13% of people living with chronic hepatitis B in Australia are getting antiviral treatment. But to make significant progress, we urgently need more community outreach, to ensure that treatment reaches everyone who needs it," adds Ms Fowlie.

Health advocates warn that many people living with viral hepatitis are unaware of their condition or unengaged in care. They may not realise their risk of liver disease and liver cancer.

"Australian governments, including the Commonwealth and all State and Territory governments, have pledged to eliminate hepatitis B and hepatitis C by 2030. To achieve this, we are calling for increased resources for the community response for the ground organisations like state and territory hepatitis organisations," said Ms Fowlie.

"Community hepatitis organisations are instrumental in providing free, confidential, and localised services. They are critical to reach people affected by viral hepatitis, ensuring they receive appropriate care," said Ms Fowlie.

"Free community services are available across Australia. The National Hepatitis Infoline (1800 437 222) offers free, confidential, localised information and support across Australia. In its first year, it delivered over 9000 episodes of service across Australia," said Ms Fowlie.

"Public awareness is key. Understanding more about hepatitis B and hepatitis C and sharing this information could save lives and prevent people from developing serious liver disease or cancer." said Ms Fowlie.

"To help raise awareness this World Hepatitis Day, more than 50 landmarks across Australia will light up green. We are calling for urgent action from decision-makers to give the "green light" to prioritise the elimination of viral hepatitis by 2030," said Ms Fowlie.

"The central message on this World Hepatitis Day is hepatitis can't wait, and Australians can't wait to get the treatment." said Ms Fowlie.

The following Australian landmarks are lighting up green on World Hepatitis Day:

Australian Capital Territory:

28th July

- Old Parliament House
- John Gorton Building
- The National Carillon
- Treasury Building
- Shine Dome
- Black Mountain (Telstra Tower)
- Royal Australian Mint
- Light rail stations
- National Museum of Australia

Queensland

28th July

- Parliament House, Brisbane City
- Kurilpa Bridge, Brisbane City
- Gateway Bridge, Murarrie/Eagle Farm
- Jacaranda Tower, Brookvale Drive, Underwood
- Telfer Street Tower, Telfer Street Shailer Park
- Wineglass Water Tower, Wineglass Drive Hillcrest
- Heritage Façade Lights, Riverside Precinct Rockhampton
- Warwick Town Hall, 72 Palmerin Street Warwick
- Stanthorpe Admin Building, 61 Marsh Street Stanthorpe
- Weeroona Park, Marsh Street Stanthorpe
- Victoria Bridge, South Townsville
- Wharton Reef Lighthouse, Palmer Street Maritime Museum Townsville
- George Roberts Bridge, Denham Street and Dean Street Townsville
- Old Magistrates Court House, Sturt Street Townsville
- Little Fletcher Bridge, Little Fletcher Street Townsville
- Victoria Street Bridge, Toowoomba
- Fig Trees, Walker Street Bundaberg
- Julia Creek Water Tower, Burke Street Julia Creek

30th July

- Story Bridge, Kangaroo Point/Fortitude Valley
- Reddacliff Place Sculptures, Brisbane City
- Tropical Dome, Mount Coot-Tha Botanic Gardens
- Breakfast Creek Bridge, Newstead
- Wickham Terrace Car Park architectural wall, Fortitude Valley
- Victoria Bridge, Brisbane City
- City Hall, Brisbane City
- King George Square, Brisbane City
- Sandgate Town Hall, Brighton Road Sandgate

South Australia:

28th July

- Unley Town Hall

30th July

- Adelaide Oval
- Parliament House South Australia

Tasmania:

28th July

- Rose Garden, Hobart
- Doone Kennedy Hobart Aquatic Centre, Queens Domain
- Cardinals & Franklin Square, Hobart
- Elizabeth Mall, Hobart
- Kennedy Lane, Hobart
- Wrest Point Hotel, Sandy Bay
- Launceston Council Chambers, Launceston
- Burnie City Council, Burnie

Victoria:

28th July

- Flinders Street Station, Melbourne
- Bendigo Conservatory, Bendigo
- Geelong Catenary Lights, Geelong
- Bolte Bridge Docklands
- Monash Park Tree, Shepparton
- Mooroopna Water Tower, Mooroopna
- Riverlinks Eastbank, Shepparton
- Box Hill Town, Box Hill

Western Australia:

28th July

- Fremantle Prison's Gatehouse
- Rockingham Foreshore, Rockingham
- North Perth Common , North Perth
- Matagarup Bridge, East Perth
- Mount Street Bridge, Perth
- Northbridge Tunnel, Northbridge
- Sky Ribbon, Perth Airport Entry, Belmont
- Elizabeth Quay, Perth
- Yagan Square, Perth
- Kalgoorlie

If you or someone you know have questions about viral hepatitis, **call the free National Hepatitis Infoline** 1800 437 222 (1800 HEP ABC) or visit www.NationalHepatitisInfoline.org.au

National hepatitis statistics are available in the Australian World Hepatitis Day Factsheet, available at www.worldhepatitisday.org.au/factsheet