



MEDIA RELEASE

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1 in 3 Australians affected by a widely misunderstood liver disease are urged to share their story

A national survey aimed at improving understanding and early action of the chronic liver condition 'MASLD' has launched today, giving 1 in 3 Australians affected by the widely misunderstood disease a national voice.

MASLD, which stands for metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease can affect anyone. Post-menopausal women, First Nations people and low socioeconomic communities are disproportionately affected.

MASLD is the most common form of fatty liver disease and can be a warning sign of serious health problems to come, including type 2 diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease.

Australians who have ever been told they have MASLD or a 'fatty liver' are encouraged to share their experience in a national survey at liverwell.org.au

Professor Paul Gow, Gastroenterologist and Liver Transplant Specialist at Melbourne's Austin Hospital, said despite the condition being so common in the Australian community most people have never heard of it or know they have it.

"A major challenge is that MASLD is going undetected or being downplayed in its initial stages - precisely the time when people can be taking positive action for their health to slow down or even reverse the disease, which we know is enormously effective."

"But this early window of opportunity is often being missed. I am seeing many patients much later when their disease has already progressed to serious damage, such as cirrhosis, liver failure, liver cancer or the need for liver transplant."

"Earlier intervention, which includes helping people understand their risk of developing MASLD and the healthy behaviours they can implement to lower this, is key to reducing the number of patients who reach this health crisis point unnecessary. What this looks like in reality is better education, detection tools, patient support and national health policies."

Brisbane mum, Sarah, was 25 years old when she accidentally discovered she had MASLD during an ultrasound for an unrelated condition. Years later, after experiencing diabetes in her first pregnancy, she was confirmed again to have MASLD.

"The attitude from my GP was along the lines of 'oh, your liver enzymes are a bit off, so you need to eat better, exercise more and lose weight.' My doctor didn't seem very concerned, so I thought there's probably no need to worry," she said.

But determined to get more answers, Sarah insisted on seeing a liver specialist. After three rejections within the public health system, she finally got into a dedicated liver clinic. She learnt her liver had accumulated a lot more fat and, without prompt attention and the right care, it could lead to liver cirrhosis and the need for a liver transplant.

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“It was scary to hear my liver was in that condition. I wish I had been taken more seriously a lot sooner,” she said.

“It’s important we talk about MASLD to raise more awareness in the community and give people a chance to share their experience, so the full picture and impact of MASLD can be recognised for change to happen.”

“I’ve had to charter my own path through the health system over many years, and I don’t want that for other people. That’s why I’m sharing my story today.”

Launched on 11 June on [Global Fatty Liver Day](#), the national MASLD survey led by [LiverWELL](#) aims to provide an evidence-based snapshot of the disease within the Australian community to call for improved policies and better support services for people living with, or at risk, of MASLD.

MASLD is a growing economic burden to the health system – but Australia is not alone.

In May 2026, the World Health Assembly, which is the decision-making body of the World Health Organization, passed the first-ever resolution on steatotic liver disease (MASLD), recognising it as an integral part and "missing piece" of the global noncommunicable disease response, highlighting the scale and urgency of action needed.

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About LiverWELL: LiverWELL champions the interests of people affected by or at risk of liver diseases including MASLD and viral hepatitis. Learn more at liverwell.org.au.

Media and interview enquiries: Claire Smoorenburg | M: +61 438 090 208