

Media Release
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National Hepatitis Awareness Week May 17 – May 23 / World Hepatitis Day May 19

Angry Anderson rocks Federation Square to raise awareness of viral hepatitis

Five young Australian bands will rock Federation Square on May 19, World Hepatitis Day, alongside Angry Anderson, to put the spotlight on viral hepatitis and help address the disturbingly low level of knowledge revealed in the latest survey.

Hepatitis Australia has joined forces with Hepatitis C Victoria to launch World Hepatitis Day with a highly anticipated rock concert. Angry Anderson, who is headlining the event, believes raising awareness about hepatitis amongst Australia's youth is vital; he acquired hepatitis B himself, but has since cleared the infection.

"When I was young I got hepatitis B after engaging in unprotected sex, so as a parent I want all young people to know how you get hepatitis B and C so that they can protect themselves against these cancer causing viruses," said Anderson.

World Hepatitis Day also marks the release of the results of a survey conducted by Hepatitis Australia in March this year, revealing an unacceptable level of confusion around viral hepatitis amongst Australians. Forty-six percent of those surveyed wrongly believe hepatitis C is transmitted via saliva; 68 percent also believing it is transmitted via unprotected sex. Hepatitis B on the other hand is a sexually transmissible infection, yet only 56 percent of respondents knew this.

In addition, the majority of those surveyed seriously underestimated the severity of viral hepatitis. Only 15 percent and 20 percent of respondents respectively, knew the hepatitis B virus and the hepatitis C virus can cause cancer.

"A government-funded social marketing campaign is desperately needed to address the confusion if we are to stem the alarming 10,000 hepatitis C infections that occur annually, and increase the two percent of people living with chronic hepatitis B and C accessing treatment," said Helen Tyrrell, CEO, Hepatitis Australia.

"The overwhelming majority of those surveyed recognised the need for more public education, with 84 percent of Australians, and 87 percent of Victorians feeling it is seriously lacking. It is time the government not only recognised, but acted upon the urgency of the situation."

Spokespeople available:

- Hepatitis Australia CEO Helen Tyrrell
- People living with hepatitis C
- Angry Anderson

Concert line-up:

- Fastrack, The Demon Parade, Red Ink, The Gun Street Girls, Calling all Cars, Angry Anderson and band.

For further information, or to co-ordinate an interview, please contact:

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Note:

For further information about hepatitis see www.hepatitisaustralia.com or call the national infoline, 1300 HEP ABC (1300 437 222).