

press release

Danish Royals witness launch of new liver health collaboration for regional, rural and remote Queensland

Canberra, Australia – 16 March 2026: Danish pharmaceutical company, [Novo Nordisk](#), has announced an extension of its collaboration with innovative mobile healthcare delivery provider, [Heart of Australia](#) (HoA), to improve early detection of metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH) in regional, rural and remote Queensland.

The collaboration was formally announced at Parliament House and witnessed by Their Majesties King Frederik X and Queen Mary of Denmark during their State Visit to Australia, alongside Novo Nordisk President and CEO, Mike Doustdar, highlighting the importance of strengthening health innovation and collaboration between Denmark and Australia.

Understanding the growing burden of MASH

MASH is a progressive chronic liver disease marked by excess fat in the liver, inflammation and liver cell damage, that can lead to liver fibrosis (scarring). It is driven by underlying metabolic conditions such as obesity and type 2 diabetes.¹ In 2019, an estimated 1.32 million people were living with MASH in Australia; this is projected to rise to about 1.85 million by 2030, equivalent to approximately 6.2% of the Australian population.²

Because MASH often develops silently, with few or no symptoms, many people remain undiagnosed until the disease has advanced.³ If left untreated, MASH can progress to cirrhosis, liver failure and liver cancer. Modelling projects liver cancer cases attributable to MASH in Australia will increase by more than 85% between 2019 and 2030.² Advanced disease can also lead to end-stage liver disease (ESLD) requiring a liver transplant, highlighting the importance of early identification and proactive care.³

Bringing liver health checks directly to Queensland communities

Under the new collaboration, two Heart of Australia mobile clinics will be equipped with a FibroScan® – a short, non-invasive ultrasound test that measures liver scarring and liver fat, allowing residents across remote, rural and regional Queensland to access onsite liver health checks without needing to travel long distance.

¹ Girish V, John S. Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD) [Updated 2025 Aug 9]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2025 Jan-. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK541033/>

² Estes C, Razavi H, Loomba R, Younossi Z & Sanyal AJ 2020, *Modeling the epidemic of nonalcoholic fatty liver disease demonstrates an exponential increase in burden of disease*, viewed 23 February 2026, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/ful/10.1111/jgh.15009>

³ Healthline 2026, *10 Symptoms That Could Actually Be a Sign of MASH*, viewed 13 February 2026, <https://www.healthline.com/health/potential-mash-symptoms>

press release

The program includes community awareness activities to increase understanding of liver disease and MASH among Queenslanders living outside major cities. Additionally, local nurses will receive specialised training over six months to deliver high-quality screening in community settings.

Dr Rolf Gomes, Heart of Australia Founder and 2026 Australian of the Year for Queensland, said: “First Nations Australians and other people living in rural Queensland often face real barriers to timely health checks and specialist care. This program brings specialised diagnostics directly into communities, making earlier detection of chronic liver disease possible. It’s a practical, community-led approach that puts patients first and supports better health outcomes closer to home.”

“This collaboration is a powerful example of what can be achieved when innovation meets community need. Together with Heart of Australia, we are strengthening early detection and expanding access to care, so more Queenslanders live healthier futures,” said Mike Doustdar.

“We are proud to build on our growing collaboration with Heart of Australia as we work to reduce health inequities and improve outcomes for people in underserved regional, rural and remote Queensland communities,” said Dr Ana Svensson, Senior Medical Director at Novo Nordisk Oceania.

About Novo Nordisk

Novo Nordisk is a leading global healthcare company founded in 1923 and headquartered in Denmark. Our purpose is to drive change to defeat serious chronic diseases built upon our heritage in diabetes. We do so by pioneering scientific breakthroughs, expanding access to our medicines and working to prevent and ultimately cure disease. Novo Nordisk employs about 68,800 people in 80 countries and markets its products in around 170 countries.

Novo Nordisk has been operating in Australia since 1976. We deliver medicines to more than 1.6 million patients in Australia for the treatment of diabetes, obesity, rare diseases and other serious chronic diseases. For more information, visit www.novonordisk.com.au

About Heart of Australia

Heart of Australia provides access to mobile specialist healthcare and testing in rural, remote, and First Nations communities. By bringing both the skilled workforce and the



press release

toolkit they need to diagnose and treat patients, Heart of Australia is bridging the gap in health equity and ultimately help country Australians live longer and healthier lives. Since launching in 2014, Heart of Australia has seen close to 20,000 patients, saved almost 900 lives, and offset over 54 million kilometres in travel for specialist appointments through operations of their seven mobile clinics.

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