

**29 May 2025 MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Australian Cricket Legend Mike Hussey Joins the Charge for Early Detection During World Haemochromatosis Week 2025**

Cricket great Mike Hussey is stepping up to the crease for a cause close to his heart to support World Haemochromatosis Week 2025 which runs 1-7 June. The campaign aims to raise awareness of haemochromatosis – Australia’s most common genetic disorder – and highlight the lifesaving potential of early detection, population screening and blood donation.

More than 150,000 Australians live with haemochromatosis, an ‘iron overload disorder’ in which the body absorbs too much iron, leading to serious but preventable health issues such as liver disease, heart failure, arthritis and diabetes.

Population screening for haemochromatosis can prevent suffering, reduce healthcare costs, and save lives, especially when targeted at high-risk groups. It is a classic case of a "preventable tragedy" — a common, serious, treatable condition that is too often diagnosed too late.

For Hussey, the fight against haemochromatosis is deeply personal. The former Test cricket star was diagnosed after losing his father to liver cancer caused by untreated iron overload.

"If there’s one message I want to get out there, it’s that haemochromatosis is manageable if caught early," said Hussey. "A simple blood test can save your life—and someone else’s too. I donate blood regularly to manage my iron level and knowing it helps others as well is incredibly rewarding."

Haemochromatosis Australia Scientific Advisor, Dr Dan Johnstone reinforced the importance of awareness, early detection and blood donation. He said, “Too much iron isn’t strength. It’s a silent threat. That’s why early detection is so critical. Despite its prevalence, Australia does not currently screen for haemochromatosis at a population level.

“Many Australians are blindsided by their haemochromatosis diagnosis as they often have no known family history.

“People often say they’re the first in their family to be diagnosed with haemochromatosis. But that doesn’t mean they’re the only one at risk. Many later recall a relative who died young from liver problems not knowing it could have been related to iron overload.”

Dr Johnstone added, “The gene that causes haemochromatosis was only discovered in 1996. It’s a recessive condition which means you need to inherit one faulty gene from each parent. Because parents can carry the gene without showing any symptoms, the condition often flies under the radar until damage is already done.”

Dr Johnstone says, “A paper from Haemochromatosis International released today, recommends that population screening for haemochromatosis should be strongly considered in countries such as Australia, based on a research study in which global experts on the disorder were surveyed. The paper can be viewed at <https://haemochromatosis-international.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Population-Screening-for-Haemochromatosis_010125.pdf> .

“Every year untreated haemochromatosis costs the Australian healthcare system over $280 million,” said Dr Johnstone. “But if caught early, it’s easy to manage. Done right, a national screening program would save lives and reduce pressure on our health system.”

Many people with haemochromatosis experience subtle symptoms in its early stages such as fatigue, joint pain and depression. These symptoms are often misdiagnosed.

Without treatment excess iron builds up in organs leading to irreversible damage. However, treatment is simple: regular blood removal, known as venesection, safely reduces iron levels. The majority of that blood can also be donated to those in need through Australian Red Cross Lifeblood.

“We are not just patients—we are lifesavers,” said Mike Hussey. “By donating blood through Australian Red Cross Lifeblood, people with haemochromatosis can turn their treatment into a powerful act of giving.”

Yet despite the ongoing need for blood and plasma, nearly 40 percent of people with haemochromatosis are unaware they may be eligible to donate.

It's time to put iron overload in the national spotlight. We need to raise awareness, push for population screening and urge Australians, especially those with a family history, to speak to their GP about getting tested. With Mike Hussey joining the charge, together we can save lives.

During World Haemochromatosis Week 2025 more than 100 iconic landmarks across Australia and the world will light up in red, a bold symbol of awareness, action and hope.

-ENDS-

**Note to editors: Mike Hussey is proud to support World Haemochromatosis Week 2025. Please note that due to prior commitments he will not be available for media interviews at this time. A photo of Mike Hussey is attached.**

**However, subject matter expert Dr Dan Johnstone as well as patient advocates are available for comment and interview upon request.**

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**About Haemochromatosis Australia**

Haemochromatosis Australia is the primary support, advocacy and education organisation for Australians affected by hereditary haemochromatosis. It works to increase awareness, promote early detection and support those living with the condition. For information about Haemochromatosis Australia visit [www.ha.org.au](http://www.ha.org.au)