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## **Snow Medical backs major national effort to tackle deadly liver disease**

The Snow Medical Research Foundation has today announced major long-term funding of \$15.5 million for a new national research program targeting fatty liver disease; a condition that affects up to one in three Australian adults annually.

Fatty liver disease (also known as Metabolic Associated Fatty Liver Disease, MAFLD) is a rapidly growing and yet silent threat to public health. MAFLD has become the leading cause of chronic liver disease worldwide and is increasingly driving cirrhosis, liver failure and liver cancer.

As obesity, diabetes and metabolic syndrome rise, the burden of liver disease is expected to grow significantly in the coming years.

Against this backdrop, Snow Medical's long-term, 7-year commitment will fund a consortium of Australia's leading liver researchers and clinicians through the Snow Program for Liver Health. This initiative will be headquartered at the Storr Liver Centre at the Westmead Institute for Medical Research and bring together researchers and clinicians from the Centenary Institute, the University of Sydney's Charles Perkins Centre, and Westmead and Royal Prince Alfred Hospitals and other partners nationally to fast-track breakthroughs in diagnosis, treatment and prevention.

Tom Snow, Chair of Snow Medical, said the program reflects the kind of long-term, high-impact science the Foundation is committed to supporting.

"Fatty liver disease is one of the biggest and most under-recognised health threats of our time. It affects millions of Australians, yet we still lack the basic scientific understanding and treatments needed to address it effectively. That is why Snow Medical is committing to long-term, team-based science giving outstanding researchers the stability and resources to tackle problems on this scale."

"Our family has a close personal connection to this work. My father, Terry Snow, lived with liver disease, and so we know firsthand how devastating and how poorly understood these conditions can be."

"We need to back Australian science for the long haul, so new discoveries can turn into real change for patients and families. That's why we're looking across the full spectrum of human health to support researchers who can fundamentally shift the future of care."

Professor Jacob George, head of the Storr Liver Centre at the Westmead Institute for Medical Research (WIMR), welcomed the partnership with Snow Medical, calling it "transformative".

"This is a landmark commitment that allows us to unite Australia's leading scientific and clinical experts to tackle a disease that has been accelerating faster than the health system can currently respond. Snow Medical's support gives us the opportunity to conduct bold,

collaborative, long-term science, work that simply isn't possible under conventional short-term funding models."

Professor Geoff McCaughan from the Centenary Institute said, "one key strength of this program is its interdisciplinary nature, leveraging basic immune system, metabolic and ageing research, as well as clinical diagnostics and large patient cohorts from diverse backgrounds."

Sally Castle, the CEO of Liver Foundation added, "every day we hear from patients living with fatty liver disease who are confused about what to do and worried about their disease progressing. This multi-year investment offers real hope that research can lead to earlier diagnosis, better treatments, and prevention, particularly for diverse communities across Australia who are disproportionately affected. It is exactly the kind of coordinated, patient-focused research effort that is urgently needed.

Part of the consortium's success also lies in their gender equality approach, aligning closely with Snow Medical values.

"The involved organisations share our vision for a research culture that nurtures diverse talent and builds long-term gender balance across biomedical leadership by ensuring women in all their diversity are represented in senior roles across all research aims and embedding structured mentoring pathways for early-career investigators," Tom Snow concluded.

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### **About the Snow Medical Research Foundation**

Established in 2019, The Snow Medical Research Foundation (Snow Medical) is the creation of Canberra's Snow family and is a vision of Ginette and Terry Snow.

Snow Medical is committed to fast-tracking medical research discoveries by supporting high-risk, high-reward science that addresses global health challenges.

To date, Snow Medical has committed over \$275 million through this Program for Liver Health, its Snow Fellowship program, the Snow Centre for Immune Health collaboration with the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, BEAT Covid, and the Snow Vision Accelerator collaboration with the University of Sydney, amongst others.

Find out more at [snowmedical.org.au](https://snowmedical.org.au)