



Media Release – 03 July 2007

Rove comedian's cruel hepatitis joke.

Hepatitis Australia has called on *Rove* comedian Peter Helliar to publicly apologise for a cruel and discriminatory attempt at humour aired on the Sunday July 1 edition of the popular light entertainment program.

As part of his regular 'Petespace' segment on the Network Ten show, *Rove* comedian Peter Helliar noted it was Pamela Anderson's 40th birthday and posed the question, 'What to get the person who has everything?'

The answer according to Helliar: **'Hepatitis...oh wait, she (Ms Anderson) already got that last year'**.

Hepatitis Australia CEO Helen Tyrrell says irresponsible comments like this add to the discrimination people living with hepatitis C face every day.

'Many of the 260,000 Australians affected by hepatitis C already experience stigma and discrimination on a regular basis, and ignorant "comedy" like this only add to the pain for people living with hepatitis C and their friends and families.

We sincerely doubt *Rove* would have featured a similar joke about "giving" a celebrity a "gift" of HIV/AIDS, but for some reason they think its acceptable to seek cheap laughs at the expense of people living with hepatitis C', says Helen Tyrrell

'The fact is, it's not acceptable, and we call on Peter Helliar to issue a public apology for his insensitive and ignorant remarks.'

If left untreated, hepatitis C can cause liver failure and liver cancer in a small but significant number of people and is now the most common reason for liver transplantation in Australia. The hepatitis C virus affects 260,000 Australians, with an estimated 9700 new infections occurring every year. The World Health Organisation estimates 170 million people worldwide are affected by hepatitis C. For more information visit www.hepatitisaustralia.com

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