

New South Wales

Election 2023



strokefoundation.org.au

Photo: Emma Beesley, NSW resident and survivor of stroke.

The incoming New South Wales Government has a unique opportunity to invest in stroke prevention, treatment, and support, which will save lives and reduce serious and lifelong adult disability in the community.

We are seeking an investment of \$3.6m over five years to ensure this Government's legacy for generations to come.

Over the next five years, 45,000 New South Wales residents will experience stroke for the first time. Around 10 per cent of those will die. Thousands more will be left with a lifelong disability which will impact their health, economic security, and future wellbeing.

New South Wales already has some of the best emergency stroke treatment in the country. Through the planned Stroke Ambulance, patients with stroke in central Sydney will soon be able to access life-saving treatment faster than ever before. The state's implementation of Telestroke gives its regional and rural communities 24/7 access to stroke specialists.

But there are still too many patients with stroke who cannot access vital and timely treatment quickly enough, and far too many are leaving hospital without the information and support they need to make the best recovery possible.

Recovering from a stroke relies on a chain reaction, called The Chain of Survival. The first link is knowing the signs of stroke; every other link in the chain depends on the first person's response. Stroke Foundation wants more Australians to instantly know when a stroke is happening and make that critical triple zero (000) call for emergency treatment. Currently, too few people know the F.A.S.T. message – Face, Arms, Speech, and Time – which signals the main signs of stroke and urges immediate action.

Our 2021 Acute Stroke Audit found that only 34 per cent of people with stroke arrived at hospital in the critical 4.5 hour window of time to receive the best treatment available.

At the other end of the stroke journey, one in every six New South Wales residents who have a stroke leave hospital without a discharge plan. Survivors of stroke

and their families describe this transition back to the community as "falling into a black hole", as they are left to find their own way through recovery.

This gap means their recovery takes longer, and puts patients at higher risk of more strokes, and an ongoing reliance on our already stretched health and disability support services.

New South Wales already delivers exceptional quality stroke treatment and care. That level of care should continue into recovery support – no one should miss out on the support they need.

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StrokeConnect Navigator Program

Stroke Foundation's National Acute Stroke Audit indicates one in four New South Wales survivors of stroke do not receive post-stroke information, and 16 per cent leave hospital without a discharge plan.

This means at least 1,200 people leave hospital each year without the necessary guidance and support to help them navigate the next step in their recovery from stroke. That is far too many people falling through the net.

Every New South Wales resident deserves the opportunity to achieve their best recovery possible after a stroke. With investment from the next New South Wales Government, Stroke Foundation will deliver its StrokeConnect Navigator Program, which brings together our flagship StrokeLine and post-hospital Outreach services.

These services are currently funded by Stroke Foundation through public donations, and that limits how many people we can help.

After receiving treatment in New South Wales' world-class stroke facilities, survivors should not be left to navigate their recovery alone. With rolling Government investment over the next five years, we can grow this important Navigator Program.

We want to be there to answer every call to StrokeLine, and to proactively contact every patient who leaves hospital after stroke to make sure they access the services they need to recover well.

Under the StrokeConnect Navigator Program we will reduce the number of secondary strokes and help people resume their contributions in workplaces, communities, and families much sooner. Collectively this will help more people resume productive lives after stroke, reduce hospital readmissions, and greatly reduce the burden on our health and disability care system.

- > StrokeConnect Navigator Program
- > \$2.6m over five years

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F.A.S.T. Community Education

Thanks to investment from NSW Health, Stroke Foundation successfully ran a three-year F.A.S.T. Community Education Program in regional New South Wales to support its rollout of 23 new Telestroke Services. The campaign moved the dial significantly, achieving a 20 per cent increase in F.A.S.T. awareness.

However, awareness of F.A.S.T. in metropolitan New South Wales is now sorely lagging. Our 2022 national survey data indicated that of Sydney residents:

- > 47 per cent do not know any of the most common signs of stroke (Face, Arms, Speech.)
- > Only 22 percent can name two of the common signs of stroke, compared to 34 per cent in regional areas.

The current New South Wales Government approved a one-year investment to support Stroke Foundation in 2023, with a targeted F.A.S.T. education plan in central Sydney. This is a great start, but to create the life-saving change that will save lives year on year, further commitment to this education program is needed.

We are asking the incoming Government to invest in this metropolitan F.A.S.T. Community Education

Program for an additional four years, allowing us to continue to educate Sydney residents and to extend our work to Wollongong and Newcastle.

Increased awareness of the F.A.S.T. message means more residents will know how to recognise common signs of stroke and understand the importance of seeking emergency treatment to give people with stroke the best chance of a successful outcome. Stroke is a time-critical medical emergency, and quick access to life-saving diagnosis and treatment means less death and disability caused by stroke. But this relies on community awareness to recognise stroke.

Time is brain, and the time for investment in F.A.S.T. education is now.

- > F.A.S.T. Metropolitan Community Education Program
- > \$1m over four years

An investment in the StrokeConnect Navigator Program is a long-term investment in the health and wellbeing of survivors of stroke in our state.

Continued investment in F.A.S.T. education will ensure more people recognise stroke and understand the importance of seeking emergency medical treatment.



Emma Beesley, New South Wales resident and survivor of stroke.







Emma has played a huge role in educating Australians about aphasia. This debilitating condition creates communication difficulties, impacting speech, reading ability, and writing. Emma's efforts to increase community awareness about aphasia drew on her personal experience as a survivor of stroke. She won the 2021 Courage Award at the annual National Stroke Awards for her generosity and willingness to share her story in order to help others.

About Stroke Foundation

Stroke Foundation is a national charity that partners with the community to prevent, treat and beat stroke. We stand alongside survivors of stroke and their families, healthcare professionals and researchers. We build community awareness and foster new thinking. We support survivors on their journey to live the best possible life after stroke.



How to get more involved

-  **Give time** – become a volunteer.
-  **Raise funds** – donate or hold a fundraising event.
-  **Speak up** – join our advocacy team.
-  **Leave a lasting legacy** – include a gift in your Will.
-  **Know your numbers** – check your health regularly.
-  **Stay informed** – keep up-to-date and share our message.

Contact us

-  **1300 194 196**
-  **strokefoundation.org.au**
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