Since the 2013-17 Strategic Plan commenced in January 2013, the National Stroke Foundation (NSF) has focused on ensuring all programs and projects are aligned with these strategic priorities and goals.

The strategic priorities outlined in the five-year plan are:

1. Building Profile/Raising Awareness
2. Engaging Consumers
3. Focused Program Delivery
4. Consolidating and Growing Revenue
5. Strengthening Advocacy
6. Building a Nationally Sustainable Organisation

The NSF has made considerable progress towards achieving these strategic priorities as outlined in the Annual Reviews for 2013 and 2014, both of which are available from the NSF website.

At the halfway point of the strategic plan, the NSF has taken the time to reflect on what has been achieved to ensure the organisation continues to focus on programs and projects that will make the greatest impact for its vision for a world free from disability and suffering caused by stroke. This means some programs will change, some will discontinue and others will begin full-scale implementation. Detailed plans for the next three-years have been developed for all program areas to ensure the organisation remains focused and achieves its strategic priorities. Further information on the key areas of focus can be found on the following pages.

Stroke prevention

An ongoing focus on health checks and education in the community to reduce stroke risk:

- The Know your numbers program which has been successfully delivered through pharmacies in Queensland, New South Wales and at community events will be broadened to run nationally through partnerships with corporate workplaces, community groups, pharmacies and at events such as agricultural shows, expos and shopping centre stalls. The aim of the program to provide opportunistic health checks to as many Australians as possible will remain the same. Since 2007, the NSF has provided approximately 500,000 checks saving hundreds of Australians from possible strokes. The change of delivery mode and the broadening of the program will ensure it reaches more people at risk of stroke and save even more lives.

- Federal Government funding for StrokeSafe community education talks comes to an end in 2015. The Ambassadors who have made this program so successful will be encouraged to continue to volunteer for the NSF and the organisation will endeavour to continue providing speakers whenever possible. This program has reached thousands of people nationally and would not have been possible without the support of funding from the Department of Health.
Stroke treatment

The NSF will continue to build and develop an online portal for health professionals through which the existing programs will be delivered. This includes:

- Clinical Guidelines for Stroke Management,
- National Stroke Audit Program; and
- StrokeLink - the NSF quality improvement program designed to close the gap between evidence and practice in the acute and rehabilitation settings.

The portal will be the quintessential online resource for health professionals working with stroke and who are interested in improving stroke care. It will provide information on the best practice guidelines, access to hospital performance reporting and evidence-based education modules, and empower health professionals to provide best practice care and drive quality improvement in stroke management to all those affected by stroke.

Funding has been sought to update the Clinical Guidelines for Stroke Management and it is expected this project will commence during 2015.

eStroke, the online education website for people working in stroke, will also transition into the new portal which furthers the commitment to providing health professionals with the latest, evidence-based education, research and resources to ensure they are accessible when and where they are needed by practitioners.

Stroke support

The NSF will continue to focus on improving the quality of life for stroke survivors and carers by ensuring access to information and support in the right way at the right time to encourage and assist with the best possible recovery after stroke. Many survivors reported a significant gap in services and support once they returned home after hospitalisation and the NSF has developed dedicated actions to fill that gap. StrokeConnect Follow Up – an out-bound and in-bound phone service reaching out to stroke survivors once they return home. It will ensure all stroke survivors and carers are connected with and supported to access the necessary services, resources and information in order to improve their quality of life post stroke. The program will also incorporate StrokeLine, the in-bound phone and email service staffed by specialist health professionals who provide information and advice on stroke prevention, treatment and recovery helping stroke survivors to live well.

It is estimated it will take 3–5 years for full national rollout to occur for StrokeConnect Follow Up. Existing StrokeConnect and StrokeLine programs will continue until full rollout occurs. StrokeConnect Information – aims to provide each stroke survivor and carer with the information and tools they need, when and how it is needed, to encourage and assist them in their best possible recovery after stroke. This includes:

- My Stroke Journey – a resource provided in the days following a stroke which in conjunction with a series of fact sheets and a care plan provide survivors and their families with a booklet that will assist them to understand what stroke is, how it is treated and what to expect.
- enableme – a brand new online tool empowering stroke survivors to drive their own recovery. Information, tips and techniques equip stroke survivors, their family members and carers to maximise their recovery. It also provides an online community connecting peers and a forum for sharing experiences.

Stroke profile

While the profile of stroke has increased since the NSF strategy began, awareness of the organisation remains low amongst the general population. The NSF will continue to work to increase the awareness of the organisation and increase support for its programs and campaigns. This will be done through:

- A brand repositioning project designed to ensure the NSF truly understands its stakeholders, and how and why they participate in the organisation’s programs.
- The Fight Stroke campaign which will continue to advocate for government funding whilst raising the awareness of the NSF and stroke in the community.
- The Consumer Engagement Strategy – the NSF has formalised its commitment to engaging with stroke survivors and carers. This strategy will strengthen the organisation’s ability to work appropriately and effectively with consumers to benefit survivors, carers and ensure the NSF continues to represent their needs.
Stroke funding

To rollout these expanding programs the NSF will increase and diversify funding sources to continue its vital work. This will be achieved by building on the organisation’s successful funding programs and bringing more people together to Fight Stroke through:

- Advocacy – building an ‘advocacy culture’ within the NSF, educating government at federal and state levels on stroke and representing the needs of the stroke community.
- Appeals – better engagement with current supporters and reaching out to more members of the community thus demonstrating the impact their donations can have.
- Gifts in Wills – inspiring more Australians to include in their Will a bequest gift to NSF by demonstrating the value of their legacy.
- Events – empowering community members to undertake their own fundraising events for NSF or to take part in larger community events including fun runs.
- Corporate Partnerships – partnering with like-minded organisations to further the NSFs mission through provision of important campaigns and programs to the community.
- Trusts & Foundations – building on the significant opportunities philanthropic grants provide to expand the reach and impact of NSF work in the community.

We are very pleased to have recently been awarded an IMPACT Partnership Grant funded by Perpetual Trustees clients, in addition to funds from the Ian Rollo Currie Trust and the Ian Potter Foundation to help fulfil our ambitious new programs for stroke support. We are very grateful to be chosen to partner with these prestigious organisations to help close the significant gaps that still exist for stroke survivors and their families.

Cultural Diversity Strategy

The NSF is committed to equity of access and outcomes for all Australians and this is enshrined in a new Cultural Diversity Strategy. Over the next five years the NSF will work to improve stroke care by focusing on the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The NSF will do this by:

- Building strong and productive partnerships.
- Improved access to care across the stroke journey.
- Setting clear targets to improve outcomes and identify evidence-based strategies to achieve them.
- Strengthen cultural responsiveness and respect, both within the organisation and in the health sector.

By working with a strong focus on these strategies we will lay the groundwork for greater impact in the future.

Volunteer Strategy

Volunteers make valuable contributions of their time, skills and commitment to the NSF. To recognise the current contribution volunteers make to the NSF workforce and to enable the program to grow and expand, a Volunteer Strategy has been developed. Through this strategy the NSF will grow its workforce and provide opportunities for people to contribute to achieving its mission.

“Please join the National Stroke Foundation on this journey. Together we can Fight Stroke and win.”

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