



strokefoundation

# Stroke *Progress*

Stroke Foundation news for health *professionals*

March 2016



## InformMe LIVE: transforming stroke treatment and care

Australian health professionals will be empowered to deliver high quality, best practice stroke care thanks to a world-first, new online platform: **InformMe**. The Stroke Foundation came together with leading minds in stroke treatment and implementation science to launch InformMe today.

Stroke Foundation Chief Executive Officer Sharon McGowan said InformMe would transform stroke treatment and care in this country.

“The gap between care that is recommended in best practice clinical guidelines and what actually happens in Australian hospitals is costing lives and money,” Ms McGowan said.

“InformMe will help bridge these gaps in care by providing stroke care information, clinical guidelines and quality data in an easy to access format – a ‘one stop shop’ for health professionals working in the field of stroke.”

InformMe brings together resources, guidelines, data, professional support, and education in one easy to use, free and accessible location. Clinicians from across the care spectrum have been involved in every stage of InformMe development. It provides a place for allied health professionals, doctors, nurses and researchers to come together to share information, as well as source the latest news in stroke.

The strength of InformMe is that it is an evolving tool that will continue to improve and change to meet current and future health professional needs. These changes can be

almost instantaneous. Where in the past it might have taken a year to update practice guidelines and wading through journal after journal to find the research you were looking for, now with InformMe the latest research and information can be accessed in an instant.

Stroke Foundation Clinical Council Chair Associate Professor Bruce Campbell, who spoke at the launch, said InformMe broke down distance and physical barriers by not only providing information but connecting health professionals from Hobart to Cooktown, Perth to Sydney, and everywhere in between.

“Australian researchers are the brains behind the development of some of the latest, lifesaving innovations in stroke treatments and care, however access to their expertise is often limited to those located in the city. InformMe will help remove these barriers,” A/Professor Campbell said.

Become part of the InformMe community today at [www.informme.org.au](http://www.informme.org.au)

*InformMe was developed with the support of founding partner Gandel Philanthropy and the additional support of Boehringer Ingelheim.*

**InformMe**  
delivering quality stroke care

## Take part in the National Rehabilitation Audit 2016

Thank you to everyone who has signed up to participate in this year's National Rehabilitation Audit. We have received a terrific response from across the country, with 120 sites agreeing to participate – more than ever before (111 sites involved in 2014) so thank you! Sites can choose to participate in just the Organisational Survey – examining the resources and infrastructure in place at their service – but most have agreed to do both the survey and Clinical Audit – focussing on the processes of care. Like last year's Acute Audit we are using the new Australian Stroke Data Tool (AuSDaT) and we will continue working in partnership with the Australasian Rehabilitation Outcome Centre to input clinical data if available.

Although we have already started collecting data, we encourage sites to get involved if they haven't already. If your service is not currently participating, but you believe it should be, please **get in touch**.

### AuSDaT used for the 2016 Rehab Audit

The AuSDaT is being used as the platform for the 2016 National Stroke Rehabilitation Audit, making the process much easier for all sites involved. We are in the process of making a final update to enable the Australian Stroke Clinical Registry (AuSCR) to transition to use the AuSDaT from 1 July this year. We are also developing an application programming interface which will facilitate seamless and efficient interchange of data from local hospital data systems and allow linking of the AuSDaT and the INSPIRE database.

The AuSDaT is governed by a Coordinating Committee and overseen by the Australian Stroke Coalition Data and Quality Committee, based on agreed policies and procedures. For more information visit the **Australian Stroke Coalition** website or contact **Kelvin Hill** from the Stroke Foundation or **Kelly Drennan** from the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health.

## New site reports for the 2015 National Acute Audit

In February the Stroke Foundation sent out individual reports for sites that participated in the **2015 National Acute Audit**. We've had a number of comments and questions about the changes from previous site reports. We thought it would be helpful to outline the reasons we changed the reporting structure.

### Capturing all data

Sites told us they wanted to know what they were doing well and what needed to be improved. To do this, sites needed to have access to absolutely every data point, including comparisons with national averages. Previous site reports followed the same format as the National Report, including summary of just the important data captured, meaning some data was never reported. The new site reports capture more detail and maximise the use of all data.

### Benchmarking performance

The new reports provide detailed benchmarking for nationally agreed indicators, allowing sites to better understand exactly how well they are performing and stimulate quality improvement efforts. In the past, sites could see how they compared to all others but they weren't benchmarked against sites of similar stroke volume. This meant small sites were compared to very large sites which wasn't particularly helpful. In this new format in addition to national averages, sites can access state-specific averages and how they rank with others in their state and across Australia, as well as seeing averages based on groupings of hospitals with similar volumes. This will allow sites to get far more detail about how they are performing compared to national, state and peer hospitals.

### Better integration

Organisational Survey data is now better integrated into each site report, providing greater insight and showing how results were analysed against the Acute Stroke Services Framework.

In order for us to keep improving throughout future audit cycles, and to better understand the experiences of participating hospitals, we are keen to receive your feedback on the new format. We will be reaching out to sites who participated in the 2015 Acute Audit in the coming weeks to hear your thoughts on how we can improve the process. We look forward to hearing your comments.

In the meantime if you have questions or comments about the 2015 Acute Audit email [audit@strokefoundation.com.au](mailto:audit@strokefoundation.com.au)

# Australia's **BIGGEST** Blood Pressure Check

The Stroke Foundation is partnering with Priceline Pharmacy this April to deliver **Australia's Biggest Blood Pressure Check** and in 2016 it is certain to be bigger than ever before.

Free blood pressure checks will be available in more than 280 locations across Australia, including Priceline Pharmacy and Westfield shopping centres plus Know your numbers sites in Queensland.

## About the check

Australia's Biggest Blood Pressure Check aims to get more people understanding their stroke risk. The check is more than just a blood pressure check. Participants will also be asked to complete a questionnaire to help identify if they are at increased risk of stroke and cardiovascular disease and/or type 2 diabetes.

The check will only take a few minutes to complete and includes:

- A questionnaire to assess risk factors for stroke and cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes including the Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk Assessment Tool known as AUSDRISK. People are given an AUSDRISK score related to their likelihood of developing type 2 diabetes. People with diabetes tend to have high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol and twice the risk of developing cardiovascular disease.
- Blood pressure check and waist measurement.
- Their results, including a chat with a health professional. At the conclusion people with elevated risk of stroke and related chronic disease are referred to their doctor for a comprehensive health assessment.



- The Westfield locations and 60 Priceline Pharmacy stores will showcase their new interactive Digital Health Station (*pictured*). These machines conduct the same questionnaire and test using touch screens and sensors. A copy of the results can be emailed to the person upon completion.

We know Australia's Biggest Blood Pressure Check saves lives – on average 25 percent of participants discover they have high blood pressure and receive a potentially life-saving referral to their doctor.

Find out how you can get involved by visiting [www.strokefoundation.com.au](http://www.strokefoundation.com.au)



## Many strokes are preventable.

### You can help us conduct free health checks and save lives.

*Jim Mead (pictured above with his wife Sherry) knew he had high blood pressure, but because he felt well he thought everything was okay. When stroke hit Jim at age 62, it was a shock.*

The disability caused by stroke was devastating for Jim and his family. He can't walk far, and cannot use his left hand or arm. The worst thing for Jim has been losing his independence and having to rely on Sherry to do so much for him.

Many strokes could be prevented if people were more aware of their risk. Knowing your blood pressure and managing it if it is high can reduce your risk of stroke. That's why we are delivering free health checks across Australia as part of Australia's Biggest Blood Pressure Check this April. It's the best and most practical way to help prevent stroke.

Stroke Foundation would love to deliver health checks all year round not just during Australia's Biggest Blood Pressure Check – but we can't do it on our own. You can help by calling 1300 194 196, or visit [www.strokefoundation.com.au](http://www.strokefoundation.com.au) to make a secure online donation.

## Key dates

**InformMe** launch: 21 March 2016

Stroke Awards open: 29 March 2016

National Conference for Rural & Remote Allied Health Professionals call for abstracts: 27 April 2016

Not a Stroke Progress subscriber?

Visit [www.informme.org.au](http://www.informme.org.au) to sign up.

## Stroke guidelines update in full swing

The Stroke Foundation stroke guidelines update is in full swing with 90 percent of the evidence identified. Over 80 health professionals have been involved in the review process so far, working through abstracts and full text articles for the 89 questions. We are using innovative technology (MAGiCapp from Norway) to deliver this guidelines update. We are also making the recommendations process more transparent using GRADE methods within the MAGiCapp software in line with international guideline best practice. A big thanks to our 80 expert volunteers who have recently completed training with the MAGIC team from Norway in the use of GRADE and MAGiCapp.

The next stage has kicked off and reviewers are extracting data from the identified papers into the MAGiCapp platform. Development of updated recommendations is planned to be completed over the coming months, with a draft document to be circulated for public consultation later this year: watch this space.

For more information email [Leah Wright, National Coordinator, Guidelines](mailto:Leah.Wright@strokefoundation.com.au).

## Fight Stroke in Canberra

In the last twenty years the Federal Government has failed to contribute a single dollar towards a national strategy to improve stroke care in this country.

Twenty years is a LONG time for the Government to sit on their hands and do nothing about an issue that is costing too many Australians their lives.

Earlier in the month, the Stroke Foundation led a delegation of 16 amazing stroke survivors, carers and health professionals to Canberra to put stroke on the national health agenda. These courageous men and women shared their personal stories with a range of key Federal Members of Parliament and Senators, calling for urgent action on stroke.

Feedback from politicians is that this visit has had a huge impact on their appreciation and understanding of the massive impact of stroke.



The Fight Stroke delegation in Canberra was the latest step in the fight to get the Government to take action. It will take all of us banding together to fight stroke and win. Which is where you come in. If you haven't already, join our movement by signing up as a Fight Stroke member at [www.strokefoundation.com.au](http://www.strokefoundation.com.au)

## 2016 Stroke Awards coming soon

Do you work with someone going above and beyond to support their stroke patients? Is there a volunteer at your hospital working tirelessly improve the lives of stroke survivors, their families and carers? Or a stroke survivor who is inspiring others in their recovery? Why not show your appreciation by nominating them for a 2016 Stroke Award.

Nominations for the 2016 Stroke Awards open on 29 March. The Awards aim to recognise the amazing work and commitment of stroke survivors, carers and health professionals in our community.

This year there will be five award categories, each highlighting an area where people are working to improve the lives of people affected by stroke:

**Stroke Care Champion** – recognising stroke health professionals and researchers.

**Improving Life After Stroke** – recognising individuals' contribution to improving the lives of stroke survivors, their families and carers.

**Fundraiser of the Year** – recognising the efforts of fundraisers for the Stroke Foundation.

**Creative Award** – celebrating the creative achievements of stroke survivors.

**Courage Award** (*new category*) – celebrating the indomitable courage of stroke survivors and their carers in facing stroke recovery.

So if you know someone inspirational who is making a difference in the face of stroke, make sure you keep an eye on [www.strokefoundation.com.au](http://www.strokefoundation.com.au) for further information about the Awards or [email us](mailto:awards@strokefoundation.com.au) to find out more.



## The new My Stroke Journey is here

In 2014 the Stroke Foundation worked with hospitals to improve **My Stroke Journey**

– a guide to recovery after stroke.

While we found the booklet was working well, the separate care plan template was less successful. We also consulted with stroke survivors and carers, who told us they wanted to

hear more from people who had been through stroke and recovery. ‘Hope with realism’ was the overwhelming message of what they needed to help them on their recovery journey.

As a result of this feedback, and thanks to the generous support of nib foundation and Bayer, My Stroke Journey has been extensively updated. The new My Stroke Journey is now available as a streamlined resource that incorporates the care plan elements into the booklet, and includes a new brochure for family and friends, as well as new stroke recovery stories.

The work on My Stroke Journey does not stop here; this year we will conduct a formal consumer evaluation, and there are plans for easy English and translated versions.

If you would like to know more about My Stroke Journey, or if your implementation needs a reboot, now is a fantastic time to get involved. Contact your state project officer at the Stroke Foundation or **email us today**.



## enableme podcast series

Stroke survivors and carers will have a new source of information each month with the launch of a podcast series on **enableme**. The podcasts feature survivors, health professionals and other experts being interviewed on topics central to living well after stroke.

The **enableme** website launched in 2015 and brings together information, tools and community in one, accessible place. **enableme** started with a very simple idea: recovery is a lifelong journey and survivors need to be able to direct their own rehabilitation for as long as they can get better. Podcasts are an effective, portable, convenient and intimate way to deliver information.

The podcast series began with an **episode on neuroplasticity**, featuring physiotherapy lecturer Michelle McDonnell, neuroscientist Dr Lavinia Codd, stroke survivor Karen Bayly and occupational therapist Simone Russell about their experience in retraining the brain.

Future topics will include secondary prevention, fatigue, communication, spasticity, exercise, pain, childhood stroke and navigating the health system. We’re also planning a podcast on finding reliable health information, called ‘show me the evidence’. Transcripts are available for each podcast. If you’re interested in being involved, or know someone who might be perfect for one of the topics above, please contact **Chris Lassig**.

*The enableme podcast series is proudly sponsored by Allergan.*

## Reinventing Emma: The inspirational story of a young stroke survivor

At just 24, Emma Gee had her whole future ahead of her. She was an occupational therapist, an avid runner and had just climbed Borneo’s Mt Kinabalu with a group of friends. But months later she was suddenly a stroke patient, unable to move, speak or swallow and dependent on the medical system she had worked within. Emma’s debut novel launched earlier this month, *Reinventing Emma*, tells of her harrowing experience of surviving a debilitating stroke. As a former health professional Emma has a rare insight into life as a patient, and emerges with a very different perspective on person-centred care and what it takes to live with resilience. This is not only the story of a young stroke survivor, but also an insightful observational memoir for health professionals, written by one of their own who has travelled to ‘the other side’.

To find out more about Emma’s remarkable story visit **[www.emma-gee.com/the-book](http://www.emma-gee.com/the-book)**

### Stroke Foundation

#### National Office

Level 7, 461 Bourke Street

Melbourne VIC 3000

P: +61 3 9670 1000

E: [admin@strokefoundation.com.au](mailto:admin@strokefoundation.com.au)

We have offices in Brisbane, Canberra, Hobart, Perth and Sydney.

StrokeLine: 1800 STROKE (1800 787 653)

[www.strokefoundation.com.au](http://www.strokefoundation.com.au)



/strokefoundation



@strokefdn



@strokefdn

[www.enableme.org.au](http://www.enableme.org.au) – our online tool to aid stroke recovery.

[www.informme.org.au](http://www.informme.org.au) – our online tool to assist health professionals.