

StrokeMatters

Winter/Spring 2021



"He was the most extraordinary person, the love of my life, the joy in my life."

Joy Barton

Leaving a lasting legacy...

Every 19 minutes, another Australian has a stroke. They'll be our sisters, husbands, daughters, dads and best mates. They'll be people with dreams, responsibilities, work and interests they love, and families who love them.

Joy lost her husband Allen after he had a massive stroke in 2006. Before stroke took his life, Allen had already experienced a series of 'mini-strokes' that began back in 2004.

Joy told us that she believed that research, support, advice and awareness, funded by the Stroke Foundation, helped give her and Allen a precious extra two-and-a-half years of being together.

The help of the Stroke Foundation was phenomenal. We got such a lot of support and information on diet, exercise; everything we needed to know about living in the shadow of stroke."

This kind of practical help and emotional comfort should be available to more – indeed all – Australians who survive a stroke, and to the loved ones who care for them. Sadly we know that this is far from the case at the moment.

Joy's dream was to hold an 80th birthday party for her beloved Allen – which they were able to enjoy together with the rest of their family. Allen died after suffering a massive stroke exactly one month after that family party.

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› 25 years dedicated to stroke



From the Desk of the Chief Executive Officer

Thank you for standing with us as we continued our mission during unprecedented challenges.

In 2020, the world faced a new threat and a changed reality when the *World Health Organisation (WHO)* announced the coronavirus (COVID-19) as a global pandemic. The impact was profound and immediate with restrictions on public movement, mandatory facemask wearing and major disruptions to health and community services.

With your support, Stroke Foundation leaned-in to the challenges knowing the services we provide for the stroke community were needed more than ever. We quickly moved our people to remote working ensuring our key services were a constant for those in need of advice, support and information. We partnered with the community to identify where gaps existed and acted, adapting and evolving with the environment around us.

Being resilient, thinking outside the box, adapting quickly, and working with our community has been central to our work over the past 12 months. Stroke Foundation has continued this approach in 2021, as we celebrate all that we have achieved over the past **25 years** and set our sights on **preventing, treating and beating stroke**.

We are making gains in improving outcomes from stroke, however there is much more to be done and we can only achieve our mission with your continued and vital support. **Thank you for continuing to prevent stroke, save lives and enhance recovery.**

Sharon McGowan
Chief Executive Officer
Stroke Foundation

Stroke Foundation welcomes new **President**

Stroke Foundation is delighted to announce the appointment of Professor Linda Kristjanson AO as President and Chair of the Board.

Professor Kristjanson takes the helm from Professor James Angus AO, who served a six-year term in the role and officially stepped down at the organisation's Annual General Meeting on 5 May 2021.

Professor Kristjanson, who has a distinguished career in health, education and business, said she was delighted and excited to be granted the opportunity to serve as Stroke Foundation President.

"Stroke Foundation is known for its evidenced based approach, strong consumer engagement and its clear mission to prevent stroke, save lives and enhance recovery," Professor Kristjanson said.

"I am wholeheartedly looking forward to being a strong ambassador and champion for Stroke Foundation.

"Like thousands of people in our community, my family has a personal connection to stroke. Stroke impacts too many lives, but it does not need to be that way," she said.

It is timely that in 2021, our **25th anniversary year**, Stroke Foundation will formally welcome its first female President to lead the organisation in the important next phase of its mission to prevent stroke, save lives and enhance recovery for survivors of stroke.

Professor Linda Kristjanson AO



The next generation of stroke researchers

With the rate of stroke increasing among younger adults (35–54 years) and emerging international studies finding there may be a link between coronavirus (COVID-19) and increased stroke risk, research is needed now – more than ever – to help people with stroke survive and thrive.

Six research projects shared in \$375,000 of funding through Stroke Foundation's grant round including the four recipients of the *Early Career Seed Grants* (\$50,000):

- › **Lauren Christie, Nursing Research Institute (NRI) – St Vincent's Health Network, Sydney and Australian Catholic University.** *ReCITE (Remote Constraint Induced Therapy of the upper Extremity).* Study investigating telehealth as an alternative to face-to-face therapy targeting arm weakness after stroke.
- › **Dr Caroline Baker, La Trobe University.** Optimising mood and wellbeing with aphasia after stroke: a feasibility study of *Prevention Intervention and Support in Mental health (PRISM)* via telerehabilitation.
- › **Dr Heidi Janssen, Hunter New England Local Health District.** *Yarning up After Stroke* – working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people living with stroke to take a yarning-based tool for self-management of recovery.
- › **Dr Di Marsden, Hunter New England Local Health District.** *Let's have a yarn about our bladder* – partnering with Aboriginal people to implement stroke guideline-recommended urinary continence and lower urinary tract symptom care that is culturally appropriate and safe.



Lauren Christie



Dr Caroline Baker



Dr Heidi Janssen



Dr Di Marsden



Understanding the economic impact of stroke

Stroke Foundation commissioned Deloitte Access Economics to deliver **The economic impact of stroke in Australia, 2020**, quantifying the impact of stroke.

Using financial modelling, the report looks at direct health system costs as well as the broader impact of short and long-term disability on the community. It also provides roadmaps for focus and investment to change the course of this disease, highlighting the opportunity and value in preventing stroke and improving access to stroke treatment.

With an estimated 27,428 Australians experiencing stroke for the first time in their lives in 2020, and an estimated 445,087 survivors of stroke living in the community, the economic cost of stroke exceeded \$6.2 billion. A further \$26 billion in lost wellbeing due to short and long-term disability, and premature death.

Reducing uncontrolled high blood pressure and improving access to stroke treatment and care could equate to savings of \$179 million over five years in economic costs and \$2.4 billion in reduced mortality and improved wellbeing annually.

- › **To read the full report visit strokefoundation.org.au/What-we-do/Research/Economic-impact-of-stroke-in-Australia**

The right treatment, at the **right time**

With the right treatment, at the right time, many people will recover from stroke. However, not all Australians have access to these vital treatments when they are most needed.



Stroke **Ambulance**

A **Stroke Ambulance** brings emergency stroke diagnosis and treatment to the patient. Equipped with the latest diagnostic technology – including a brain scanner and telemedicine equipment – and specialist staff on board, Stroke Ambulances improve outcomes for stroke patients.

- › After three years of operation, the Melbourne-based **Stroke Ambulance** (or *Mobile Stroke Unit*) provides treatment after onset up to 74 minutes faster compared to Australian hospital treatment and 40 minutes faster compared to metropolitan Melbourne hospitals.

- › The New South Wales (NSW) Government announced a **Stroke Ambulance** was set to be trialled in the state. This builds on the success of the Melbourne-based **Stroke Ambulance**.



Stroke Ambulance treatment times are 74 minutes quicker than the average hospital treatment time nationally.

Stroke **Air Ambulance**

You helped us put Australia's first **Stroke Ambulance** on the road, now Australia could become home to the world's first **Stroke Air Ambulance!** It would transform access to emergency stroke treatment for people in rural and regional areas, who are 19 per cent more likely to have a stroke and experience a worse outcome.

Stroke Foundation partners with like-minded organisations and governments to maximise its impact and achieve its goals. Important collaborations like the *Australian Stroke Alliance* – of which Stroke Foundation is a partner – is currently focused on developing portable brain imaging tools in air and road ambulances.

Leaving a **lasting legacy**...

› Continues from front page

Joy always firmly believed that without the Stroke Foundation's support, Joy and Allen would never have been able to celebrate that special day together.

Joy chose to support the work of the Stroke Foundation in a number of ways. She was always happy to share her story in the hope it would inspire others to care as deeply about stroke as she did.

Sadly, we lost a loving, caring and wonderfully compassionate woman when, in March 2012, the day after her 81st, Joy

passed away. She took with her the happy memories of Allen's 80th birthday and of their life together.

Even now, after her passing Joy is still caring for stroke survivors and their loved ones. You see, one of her kindest acts of support before her death was to include a gift to the Stroke Foundation in her Will

Thanks to her generous final gift and act of kindness, Joy's support of our mission – to prevent stroke, save lives and enhance recovery – continues.

Joy was a caring supporter of the Stroke Foundation because she understood – all too well from personal experience – just what a difference our work makes to the lives of Australians who are struck down by stroke.

You too can help create a future where having a stroke doesn't mean losing the things you love – your health, lifestyle, dreams, and the people who matter most.

- › **For more information on leaving a gift to Stroke Foundation in your Will visit strokefoundation.org.au/giftsinwills**

Include a Charity Week 6–12 September 2021

Imagine a world without your favourite charities and all of the excellent work that they do...

Did you know that a gift left in your Will leaves a lasting legacy? Without these legacies, our impact would not be as far-reaching, and we would struggle to continue our work. That's why we are one of nearly 90 charities

who are working together as part of the **Include a Charity** campaign.

This Include a Charity Week, we ask you to consider, when the time is right, and you have taken care of your family and loved ones, to leave a gift in your Will that will have a lasting impact and help our work live on.

- › Find out more about how you can help and leave a lasting legacy by visiting strokefoundation.org.au/giftsinwills



**INCLUDE
A CHARITY**
Make your mark



Stroke Foundation Young Stroke Project

Almost 39 percent of first-time strokes in Australia strike people aged between 20 and 64 years. Around 124,000 Australians in this age group are living with the impact of stroke.

With the support of a grant from the *National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)*, Stroke Foundation commenced a three-year co-designed **Young Stroke Project** to deliver tailored information to working-age survivors of stroke, aged 18–65 and their support crew. Launching with workshops, podcasts and videos.

The project includes engaging with diverse communities, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and LGBTQI+ communities. youngstrokeproject.org.au

Young survivor of stroke,
Shannon Nelson



Connecting Communities

EnableMe is Stroke Foundation's online platform designed with survivors of stroke to provide information and resources across the stroke journey.

In 2020 **EnableMe** was accessed by 105,413 survivors of stroke, their families, carers and supporting health professionals; together 367,400 pages of information were accessed in 2020.

A total of 2,444 survivors of stroke, their carers and families utilised **StrokeLine** – our free information and advice telephone helpline service staffed by health professionals – to obtain stroke support and advice.

With State Government support, Stroke Foundation provided a telephone based follow up program for survivors of stroke. The program focuses on ensuring survivors are connecting with community based services and are educated about how to prevent secondary stroke. The service supported the following survivors of stroke:

- › **152** Queenslanders received follow up support.
- › **421** people of the ACT received a follow up telephone call.
- › **42** Tasmanians received referrals, with 85% of patients receiving a call within 21 days.

Stroke news around the nation



WA

WA

A \$9.7 million commitment from WA Government to expand the Statewide **Telestroke Service**, as part of WA Recovery Plan delivers on a key focus of the Sustainable Health Review to provide more telehealth services so patients with suspected stroke can access specialist consultant expertise 24/7.

NSW

The New South Wales (NSW) Government announced a Stroke Ambulance is set to be trialled in the state. This builds on the success of the Melbourne-based **Stroke Ambulance**.

A Stroke Ambulance brings emergency stroke diagnosis and treatment to the patient. Equipped with the latest diagnostic technology – including a brain scanner and telemedicine equipment – and specialist staff, Stroke Ambulances improve outcomes for stroke patients.

QLD

My health for life – By the end of 2020 over 207,000 Queenslanders had a risk assessment and over 10,000 completed the program.

The *My health for life* program has continued to demonstrate successful outcomes with 70 percent of participants reducing their waist circumference and the average number of mentally unhealthy days identified by participants dropped from 6.4 to 4.8 days.

ACT

Stroke Foundation welcomed a four-year investment from the ACT Government into a specialist **F.A.S.T.** education program tailored to maximise the benefits of Canberra's Walk-in Centers.

Clinician education will be partnered with health checks and resources to prevent stroke and improve access to stroke treatment amongst the vulnerable.



NSW



VIC



TAS

My health
for life

QLD



SA



ACT



NT

VIC

The Ryman Healthcare Mobile Health Screening Service, delivered in partnership with Stroke Foundation, visited 22 sites across Victoria in early 2020: including bowls clubs, farmers markets and universities.

Services were suspended for the majority of last year due to COVID-19 restrictions, however it was re-launched again at Epworth Geelong Hospital for World Hypertension Day on 17 May 2021.

TAS

A stroke prevention framework, funded by the Tasmanian Government, was delivered to help Tasmanians access a free, interactive health check to reduce their stroke risk.

A total of 2,376 Tasmanians visited health check stations and 19 percent of those who participated in a follow-up check showed health improvements.

SA

South Australian Janet Weir was recognized as a finalist at the *Stroke Foundation 2021 Stroke Awards*. Janet's father, uncle and daughter all suffered from Trans Ischemic Attacks (TIAs). As a result of these close connections Janet is passionate about stroke prevention and spreading greater awareness in the community.

Janet is a volunteer **StrokeSafe** Speaker who joined the program in 2013 when it first began in South Australia.

NT

Darwin survivor of stroke, Trish Higgins, who found passion and purpose in painting after experiencing a stroke at the age of 57 (in 2018), was awarded the *Creative Award at the Stroke Foundation 2021 Stroke Awards*.

Trish said winning the *Creative Award* came as a complete surprise. She shares, "I just love to paint in bright colours and share my work with others. It makes me happy, and I feel like I can achieve anything."

StrokeSafe speaker and 2021 Volunteer of the Year Stroke Awards finalist Janet Weir

Reduce your risk
Things you can do
Daily physical activity
at least 30 minutes per day



StrokeSafe Speaker Program

Our **StrokeSafe** Speakers deliver life-saving messages about stroke to workplaces, community groups and events.

StrokeSafe presentations are now available both in person and virtually in all states across the country. While virtual **StrokeSafe** presentations were developed in response to coronavirus pandemic, they're now helping us reach regional and rural areas that were previously difficult to access.

Make your **Stroke Week** event a memorable one by inviting a **StrokeSafe** Speaker to present. It could save a life!

› To request a speaker please visit strokefoundation.org.au/strokesafe

Australia's Biggest Blood Pressure Check

Australia's Biggest Blood Pressure Check delivers free health checks in the community – raising awareness of the link between high blood pressure and stroke – empowering Australians to know their stroke risk and understand how to manage it.

Untreated high blood pressure remains the single largest risk factor for stroke. Research estimates that if we all kept our blood pressure within healthy levels, around 48% of strokes could be prevented.

During May, Stroke Foundation partnered with **Blooms The Chemist** for Australia's Biggest Blood Pressure Check, with more than 100 stores participating and radio ads aired nationally. Media coverage, included print, radio, television and social media also took place.

If you didn't get your blood pressure checked in May, don't delay any longer! You can still visit your nearest **Blooms The Chemist** for a check anytime.

› To find your nearest store, go to bloomsthechemist.com.au/store-finder or book an appointment with your GP for a **Blood Pressure check today!**



Childhood stroke survivor Georgia with her family

Helping young families navigate impacts of stroke

Georgia was just 11 months old when she suffered a stroke and lost all movement on her right-hand side.

Following her stroke, Georgia spent six weeks in intensive care and more than two months on a hospital ward. Georgia's parents, Tony and Kim Peacock, were by their daughter's side 24/7.

With backgrounds in health care, Tony and Kim were aware of the importance of early rehabilitation. Within eight weeks Georgia began speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and hydrotherapy. Georgia responded well to her early rehab.

Although positive gains were being made, something was missing. Georgia's parents wished they could speak to someone who had been in their shoes. Unfortunately, there was very little information available. When Stroke Foundation launched **Our Family's Stroke Journey** in 2020, the resource filled this gap, providing examples of recovery journeys of other children, and their families, impacted by stroke.

National Stroke Week: 2–8 August

This year's National Stroke Week will highlight the importance of frontline healthcare workers. Healthcare workers deliver life-saving treatment and help save lives.

We also champion the general public who recognise the **F.A.S.T. (Face, Arm, Speech, Time)** signs of stroke and call an ambulance, thereby potentially saving a life.

In 2021, you can get involved and raise awareness in your own way. Sign up and receive your free **National Stroke Week kit** to support your activity including a range of hard copy and digital resources for your home or workplace.

- › **Get your free National Stroke Week kit today at strokefoundation.org.au/strokeweek**



Stride4Stroke 2021

In 2020 the community rallied together to help make Stride4Stroke our most successful year ever!

Nearly 1500 participants walked, ran, swam and cycled over 140,000 km in their local communities. We are pleased to say these active heroes raised a record breaking \$442,000 to ensure survivors of stroke live well after stroke and to save more lives.

This November Stride4Stroke is back! All you need to do is pick your activity, set a fundraising goal and share with your friends, family, and colleagues.

- › **Don't wait, register your interest today stride4stroke.org.au**

Contact us

- 📞 1300 194 196
- 🌐 strokefoundation.org.au



Get your trek on!

On 24 May, 7 inspiring individuals journeyed to the Northern Territory for a 5-day 60km trek along the Larapinta Trail in support of Stroke Foundation. Whilst at times the going was tough, every step and every kilometre they covered helped in the fight against stroke.

Are you interested in undertaking your own trek? This November you can join a one-day hike in the Tasmanian wilderness.

- › **Tickets sell out fast, so keep up to date by registering your interest at tasmanianiconicwalks.org**
- › **Want more action? Join one of our many fun run events fundraise4stroke.org.au/join-other-events**



25 years
dedicated
to stroke