

## A plan for better stroke awareness and support for all Australians

- › Stroke Foundation's 2022–2023 Federal Pre-Budget Submission identifies key opportunities for the Australian Government to work in partnership with the Stroke Foundation, to give all Australians the best possible chance of surviving, and living well after stroke. This will benefit the community and economy, and contribute to a more sustainable health system.
- › This year alone, Australians will experience more than 27,400 first-time strokes<sup>1</sup>, and there are more than 445,000 survivors of stroke living in the community<sup>1</sup>, many with an ongoing disability.
- › Firmly embedding the life-saving F.A.S.T. (Face, Arms, Speech, Time) message in the community will ensure as many Australians as possible know the signs of stroke, and understand the importance of calling triple zero (000) immediately.
- › Advancements in treatment mean that when they arrive at hospital within the critical time window for treatment, more Australians are now surviving stroke; however, for survivors and their families, stroke's impact is far reaching. Recovery from stroke can be a difficult experience, and investment is needed in initiatives that help survivors of stroke, their families, and carers, navigate the complex health system after they leave hospital, and empower survivors to live well.
- › We have an opportunity to act to change the course of this disease, and deliver a better health system now, and for generations for come. It's an investment we can, and must make.

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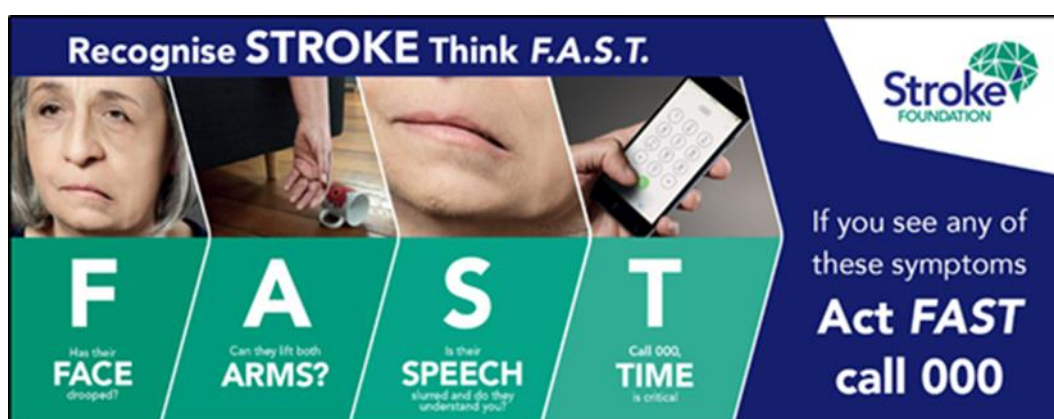


## Proposal 1

### F.A.S.T. (Face, Arms, Speech, Time) National Advertising Campaign

**Investment:** \$5 million.

**Impact:** Stroke is a time-critical illness and faster diagnosis and treatment saves lives and results in improved quality of life. When someone suffers a stroke every minute counts. Stroke Foundation is seeking Federal Government investment to deliver a national advertising campaign to lift national awareness of the signs of stroke. F.A.S.T. access to treatment will mean a greater chance of recovery and decreased costs for our health system.



## Implementation

Implementation of a **F.A.S.T. (Face, Arms, Speech, Time) National Advertising Campaign** will increase the number of Australians who understand how to recognise a stroke when it occurs, and how vital it is to call an ambulance immediately. This campaign will support and strengthen the work of Stroke Foundation's current F.A.S.T. Community Education program, reaching a broader audience, and using a national platform and single message.

This investment will deliver a **national TV advertising campaign**, which will be crucial for driving awareness and long-term recall of the F.A.S.T. message in the target audience. This will provide **nationwide coverage over 12 months** in all capital cities, with content showing during peak viewing times.

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We know that the use of other channels, in combination with TV, can help to reinforce and strengthen understanding of key messages. As such, the TV campaign will be supported by our existing channels, through an **online community education campaign** that will run concurrently, and **F.A.S.T. advertisements and other digital marketing resources across radio, and social media channels**, including Facebook and Instagram.

An **evaluation plan** will be developed to produce a report on the outcomes at the end of the campaign. Precise measures will be devised at the commencement of the project, however the key outcome will be recall of the F.A.S.T. signs of stroke in the target audience.

## The opportunity

### Current F.A.S.T. awareness in Australia

Market research completed in September 2021 has indicated there is a healthy awareness of the F.A.S.T. signs of stroke in some areas of Australia<sup>2</sup>, due largely to Stroke Foundation's F.A.S.T. Community Education program, which includes the delivery of StrokeSafe presentations. Importantly however, the majority of Australians need considerably more education to recognise the signs of stroke, as<sup>2</sup>:

- › Only 30 percent of Australians recognise two or more of the most common signs of stroke (facial drooping, inability to lift both arms, and slurred speech).
- › People living in the five main capital cities are less likely to recognise signs of stroke than other Australians.
- › 40 percent of Australians cannot name any signs of stroke, which means they are less likely to seek the urgent medical treatment required.

### Benefits of greater F.A.S.T. awareness

After Stroke Foundation's last national F.A.S.T. campaign in 2013–14, funded by the Federal Government (\$2 million), there was an increase in Australia's awareness of the signs of stroke from 35 percent to 39 percent<sup>3</sup>, which was reflected as an immediate 0.5 percent increase in calls to ambulance services for stroke emergencies. More recently, the value of such campaigns has been highlighted in regional areas of NSW, where in 2021, 70 percent of residents surveyed knew at least one of the signs of stroke following a F.A.S.T. advertising campaign in these areas.<sup>2</sup>

These results are also reflected internationally. In New Zealand, calls to emergency services increased by 32 percent while the F.A.S.T. campaign was being delivered<sup>4</sup>, and in the United Kingdom calls increased by 78 percent.<sup>5</sup>

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There is a social and economic benefit to be derived from increased awareness of the signs of stroke. Better awareness means more people getting to hospital in time for life saving treatment, and ultimately less death and disability from stroke. A systematic review and meta-analysis published in *The Lancet* has found for every 1,000 patients who receive clot-dissolving treatment up to six hours after stroke, approximately 100 more will be alive and independent than if they had not received treatment.<sup>6</sup> A 2016 evaluation of the F.A.S.T. campaign in the United Kingdom showed a 28:1 return on marketing investment, which included benefits to the state and a decrease in care costs.<sup>5</sup>

## Proposal 2

### StrokeConnect Navigator Program

**Investment:** \$10 million over 3 years.

**Impact:** Based on Stroke Foundation's own existing services' data, we know there is unfulfilled demand for services from survivors of stroke who cannot easily navigate the health system after leaving hospital, describing it as 'falling into a black hole'. Investment in a StrokeConnect Navigator Program will ensure more Australians, regardless of where they live, are supported to manage their stroke recovery, and live well, which will have benefits for both the health system and economy.

#### Implementation

**Stroke Foundation is seeking to reimagine its flagship StrokeLine service, building on existing capabilities to deliver a digitally enabled and enhanced, equitable, and accessible national service.**

Significant investment will enable us to extend our inbound information and support service, and implement our new continuity of care service, under the StrokeConnect Navigator Program. This will include technological upgrades, increased digital health capabilities and an additional 10 'Stroke Navigators', who will:

- › Ensure the inbound service manages all enquiries quickly and appropriately, and increases capacity to work with hospitals as they prepare survivors for discharge.
- › Deliver an equitable, proactive national outreach program to provide continuity of care and connection.

The StrokeConnect Navigator Program will offer a personalised, two-tier service delivered via Stroke Foundation, depending on the level of need:

- › a **tailored, self-directed digital solution** for those at low risk of hospital readmission and poor physical, social, and mental health outcomes; and
- › a **guided, intensive solution** for those at medium-high risk of hospital readmission and poor physical, social, and mental health outcomes.

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## Evaluation

An evaluation plan will be developed to produce a report on the outcomes at the end of the project. Precise measures will be devised at the commencement of the project, and could include the following elements, measured 12 months after implementation:

- › Number of Australian hospitals referring to the program, number of referrals to the program, and number of survivors of stroke and their families benefiting from the program, annually.
- › Referrer and participant satisfaction with the program.
- › Number of survivors of stroke receiving care coordination, including referrals to other service providers and outpatient appointments, annually.
- › Degree of disability, or dependence in activities of daily living, in survivors of stroke.
- › Knowledge, self-efficacy, and health literacy, in survivors of stroke.
- › Health related quality of life, emotional wellbeing, levels of distress, and rates of anxiety and depression, in survivors of stroke.
- › Social connection and return to work, in survivors of stroke.
- › Family and carers' quality of life and physical and emotional wellbeing, and family involvement in recovery and rehabilitation.
- › Rates of secondary stroke and hospital readmission.

## The opportunity

**Navigating the complex health system after leaving hospital is often one of the greatest barriers to success that Australian survivors of stroke face in their recovery journey.** This can add time and frustration to their recovery, and lead to poorer health outcomes, and hospital readmissions. **Continuity of care is an issue for survivors of stroke once discharged from acute care, which has become more profound during the pandemic, as a result of increased pressure on the Australian health system.** We know that 35 percent of Australian survivors of stroke leave hospital without a care plan, and 30 percent leave hospital without education about behaviour change for modifiable stroke risk factors.<sup>7</sup> This leaves many Australians unable to achieve their best possible recovery, manage their health, and live well after stroke.

Stroke Foundation delivers a variety of products and services for survivors of stroke, their carers and families, including the My Stroke Journey suite of resources, StrokeLine, and EnableMe. However, only 750 people who experienced a stroke received an outreach service (outbound), and 2,444 self-referred to the helpline

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(inbound) over a six month period in 2020. This is only a small percentage of the nearly 450,000 Australians living with stroke, and the nearly 27,000 having a stroke for the first time in 2020, suggesting that a significant number are not accessing the support services available that could assist in recovery after stroke. **This highlights the need to develop a targeted outreach service that will enhance continuity of care through improved access to, and use of, supportive services provided by the Stroke Foundation and other community services.**

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## Alignment with Australian Government priorities

Proposals outlined in this submission support Australia's Long Term National Health Plan to build the world's best health system:

- › **Pillar One:** Guaranteeing Medicare, stronger primary care, and improving access to medicines through the PBS.
- › **Pillar Two:** Supporting our public and private hospitals, including improvements to private health insurance.
- › **Pillar Three:** Mental health and preventive health.



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## About Stroke Foundation

The 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 and innovative treatments. We support survivors on their journey to live the best possible life after stroke. We are the voice of stroke in Australia and we work to:

- › Raise awareness of the risk factors, signs of stroke and promote healthy lifestyles.
- › Improve treatment for stroke to save lives and reduce disability.
- › Improve life after stroke for survivors.
- › Encourage and facilitate stroke research.
- › Advocate for initiatives to prevent, treat and beat stroke.
- › Raise funds from the community, corporate sector and government to continue our mission.

## Contact

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