


Strategy 2022

Prevent stroke. Save lives. Enhance recovery.



The Stroke Foundation is a national charity that partners with the community to prevent, treat and beat stroke.

We stand alongside stroke survivors 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.

State of stroke

Stroke is increasing with population growth but fewer Australians are dying from stroke.

- › Stroke death rates in Australia fell by 70 percent between 1970 and 2010.
- › Australians will suffer more than 56,000 strokes in 2017, yet more than 80 percent of these could have been prevented.
- › An estimated four million Australians live with high blood pressure. High blood pressure remains the top risk factor for stroke.
- › Awareness of stroke as a major health issue remains low across the general community.

There have been great advances in acute stroke treatment but access is a barrier for many Australians.

- › Number of dedicated stroke units in Australia:
 - **2007 – 54 stroke units treating 55 percent of stroke patients.**
 - **2017 – 95 stroke units treating 69 percent of stroke patients.**
- › Regional Australians are 19 percent more likely to have a stroke, yet are less likely to have access to best practice, lifesaving stroke treatment and care.
- › 43 percent of clinicians are not routinely using the *Clinical Guidelines for Stroke Management*.




Stroke survivors are more connected but experience a care gap after they leave hospital.

- › Online stroke community EnableMe and our social media channels have allowed stroke survivors to connect more than ever before.
- › 30 percent of patients are discharged from hospital without risk factor education, leaving survivors at serious risk of recurrent stroke.
- › One in five patients are discharged from rehabilitation without a care plan. Patients are leaving hospital unprepared for the often long and challenging recovery journey.
- › Almost half of stroke survivors are not having their mental well-being assessed as part of rehabilitation. Of those who are assessed, two out of three identified as needing help are not being provided with it, limiting their recovery.

Despite being one of Australia's biggest killers, stroke awareness remains low and research is chronically underfunded.

- › Not enough Australians recognise the F.A.S.T signs of stroke (Face, Arms, Speech and Time), limiting access to time critical treatment.
- › New treatments are only useful if administered within 4.5 or 6 hours of a stroke. Ongoing trials hope to increase this treatment window.
- › Stroke research is critically underfunded given its community impact.
- › There are significant gaps in the area of rehabilitation simply because not enough research has been done.



*“Stroke can be prevented,
it can be treated and it
can be beaten.”*

From our President and Chief Executive Officer

Today, stroke kills more men than prostate cancer, more women than breast cancer and leaves thousands with an ongoing disability. Every nine minutes a stroke will be experienced by someone in Australia. There are an estimated 475,000 stroke survivors living in our community, the majority with a disability that impacts their everyday life.

Stroke’s burden on our community and on our health system is ever increasing, as our population ages and our lifestyle becomes more sedentary. By 2050 there is expected to be a stroke every four minutes and one million stroke survivors living in our communities.

Yet stroke can be prevented, it can be treated and it can be beaten.

Stroke Foundation’s 2013-2017 Strategic Plan laid the foundation for our next five years. Much has been achieved during this period. There have been enormous steps forward in time critical stroke treatments including access to clot busting therapy, implementation of a new clot removal procedure and the advent of Australia’s first Stroke Ambulance. The number of stroke units across the country has increased to 95 (from 54 in the year 2007). More Australians than ever before are aware of their stroke risk thanks to almost 400,000 free health checks.

Awareness of the signs of stroke (F.A.S.T message) is also higher thanks to a national advertising campaign in 2013/14.

The 2022 Strategic Plan will build on these achievements. It sets out five clear strategic goals.

Goal 1 Fewer preventable strokes in Australia.

Goal 2 Ensure all Australians have access to the best evidence-based stroke treatment.

Goal 3 Enhance recovery to help Australians live well after stroke.

Goal 4 Champion research in stroke.

Goal 5 Grow our impact and manage our charity effectively and efficiently.

In developing this Strategic Plan, we reflected on our mission and agreed to revise it to “prevent stroke, save lives and enhance recovery”. The increased emphasis on recovery reflects our efforts to support stroke survivors in living their best possible life after stroke. More Australians are surviving stroke. We must invest more in recovery, research and support. Our stroke survivors tell us that recovery is a journey, one which involves courage, hope and determination. This is the next frontier and one which we believe could see major breakthroughs in the coming years.

We also agreed to clearly align our strategic goals under the three pillars of our mission – prevention, treatment and recovery. We will further invest in preventing avoidable strokes through encouraging greater awareness of risk factors, in particular high blood pressure and the increasing incidence of atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeat) in the community. We will focus on improving access to evidence-based treatment by advocating for and addressing the current inequalities within our health system. We will support survivors to live well after stroke by improving access to support, information and services across the recovery journey.

Stroke is largely preventable and treatable. Research will help us to beat it. That is why we are increasing our efforts in this area. We must give our leading minds the space, funds and support they need to find the next game-changer in stroke. We will encourage others to join us in our efforts to champion research in stroke.

Finally, as the burden of stroke increases, we must grow our impact, particularly in primary care and the community. We will achieve this by being efficient and effective, building on and nurturing the community’s trust.

Our goals and key strategies were developed over many months following careful consideration and consultation with our people, our community and those we work closely with.

We are confident with this focus and with your support we can achieve our mission.

Finally, we would like to thank our supporters, Board members, staff and volunteers. We have achieved much together over the past 20 years and are proud to be leading this passionate organisation on the next chapter of its journey.



Sharon McGowan
Chief Executive Officer



Professor James Angus AO
President



Goal 1

Fewer preventable strokes in Australia.

Around 80 percent of strokes can be prevented. Too many Australians are at risk of stroke and other chronic diseases. Many of us are not aware of our risk and are therefore powerless to take control.

Stroke Foundation will support the community to identify and manage its risk of stroke.

To achieve this goal we will:

- › Help Australians know their blood pressure and understand that it is a key risk factor for stroke.
- › Increase community awareness and management of atrial fibrillation (AF) or irregular heartbeat. AF is associated with one in four strokes.
- › Raise awareness of all stroke risk factors and help Australians make choices to reduce and manage their stroke risk.

Result: A healthier Australia.

Goal 2

Ensure all Australians have access to evidence-based stroke treatment.

Stroke is a serious medical emergency requiring urgent medical attention. With the right treatment at the right time, many people are able to recover from stroke. However, not all Australians have access to these vital treatments.

When a stroke happens, up to 1.9 million brain cells die every minute. Treatment of stroke is time critical. The earlier treatment is delivered, the better the outcome for stroke patients.

Stroke Foundation will break down barriers to high quality evidence-based stroke treatment. We will stand alongside stroke survivors and their families, healthcare professionals and researchers to ensure all Australians have access to the vital treatment for stroke that we know saves lives and reduces disability.

To achieve this goal we will:

- › Ensure every Australian household has someone who knows the signs of stroke and to call 000. Think F.A.S.T. and act FAST.
- › Increase access to 'time is brain' therapies for all Australians.
- › Ensure all Australians have access to high quality, evidence-based stroke unit care regardless of where they live.
- › Improve access to best practice rehabilitation.
- › Empower stroke survivors to chart their own goals and navigate their recovery journey.

Result:
Better outcomes for patients.

Goal 3

Enhance recovery to help Australians live well after stroke.

Stroke is no longer a death sentence for many, but for the more than 475,000 stroke survivors and their families living in our community its impact is far-reaching.

Recovery from stroke is a journey that can literally last a lifetime. Stroke can impact anyone at any age and can leave its mark on every aspect of life. Financially, the cost of ongoing care, rehabilitation and equipment, the emotional impact, the lost earnings, and the social impact can be overwhelming. In addition, survivors and their families and carers often live with the fear of a recurrent stroke.

Too many families are being left to face this challenge on their own.

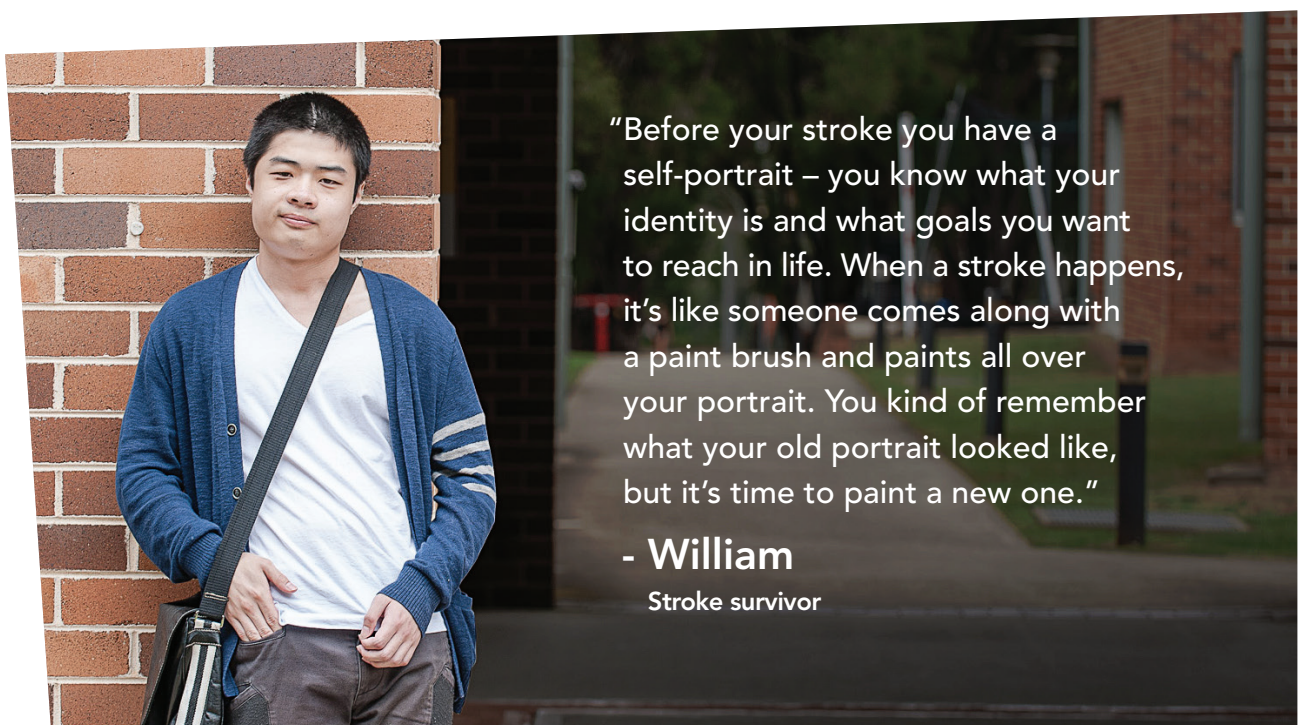
We will stand alongside stroke survivors and their families. We will support survivors on their journey to live well after stroke.

To achieve this goal we will:

- › Better equip stroke survivors to continue their recovery journey and live well after leaving hospital through comprehensive discharge care planning and follow-up.
- › Better support all survivors and their families and carers by delivering tailored stroke support tools and resources, reflecting the diversity in the Australian community.
- › Strengthen our community connections to better support survivors and their loved ones throughout their recovery journey.

Result:

Survivors live well after stroke.



“Before your stroke you have a self-portrait – you know what your identity is and what goals you want to reach in life. When a stroke happens, it’s like someone comes along with a paint brush and paints all over your portrait. You kind of remember what your old portrait looked like, but it’s time to paint a new one.”

- **William**
Stroke survivor

Goal 4

Champion research in stroke.

Stroke is largely preventable and treatable. Research will help us beat it.

Over the past two decades, the major advances we have witnessed in the diagnosis and treatment of acute stroke have led to a significant reduction in lives lost. However, the impact of stroke remains far-reaching and life-changing for many.

There is still so much we don't know about the mysteries of the brain. Breakthroughs in stroke prevention, treatment and recovery are needed now more than ever.

Effective research takes time, perseverance and a great deal of funding. However, the rewards when those breakthroughs are made will benefit generations to come.

To achieve this goal we will:

- › Advocate for more funding in stroke research.
- › Empower clinicians and allied health professionals to explore their research questions, to test their concepts and implement their innovative ideas through financial support, data sharing and expertise.
- › Partner with like-minded organisations to further our mission and support breakthroughs in stroke prevention, care, treatment and recovery.

Result: Breakthroughs in stroke.



"We want to grow the pool of skilled researchers and brilliant minds who can help us to solve the complex puzzles of stroke and improve outcomes for stroke survivors."

- Professor Amanda Thrift

Chair, Stroke Foundation Research Advisory Committee



"I feel good about knowing my gift is going to be used wisely by the Stroke Foundation in all aspects but mainly to assist those who have unfortunately suffered the debilitating effects of a stroke. I feel that I am leaving a legacy behind for others."

- Nancy

Stroke Foundation supporter

Goal 5

Grow our impact and manage our charity effectively and efficiently.

Stroke Foundation is a national charity that partners with the community to prevent stroke, save lives and enhance recovery. Our amazing supporters and volunteers join with us to stand alongside stroke survivors, health professionals and researchers by providing their time, expertise and financial support.

We respect that support and commit to repaying this trust by making sure every cent donated to Stroke Foundation is spent well. We will manage our resources to ensure we achieve the greatest impact for the largest number of people.

We will be there for the stroke community when and where we are needed most.

To achieve this goal we will:

- › Increase our profile and reputation as the trusted voice of stroke.
- › Pursue diverse income sources to ensure we are sustainable and can deliver our mission.
- › Recruit, support, and develop great people.
- › Implement business systems, tools and supports to ensure we are effective and efficient.
- › Work in a culturally responsive way to facilitate increased access to affordable, accessible, appropriate and acceptable health care within Stroke Foundation and in the wider health sector.
- › Partner with like-minded organisations to maximise our impact and reach.

Result:

A trusted, responsive and sustainable charity.





Our Vision

A world free
from disability
and suffering
caused by stroke.

Our Values

Courage.
Excellence.
Compassion.
Integrity.
Leadership.

Our Mission

Prevent stroke.
Save lives.
Enhance recovery.



Goal 1

Fewer preventable strokes in Australia

Boost the number of people who know their blood pressure and associated stroke risk

Increase community understanding of atrial fibrillation (AF) and its impact on stroke

Increase community understanding of personal stroke risk factors

A healthier Australia



Goal 2

Ensure all Australians have access to evidence-based stroke treatment

Help more Australians know the F.A.S.T. signs of stroke (Face, Arms, Speech, Time)

Ensure time critical stroke treatments are nationally accessible and supported by stroke unit care

Support hospitals to improve adherence to the rehabilitation framework and collaborative goal setting

Better outcomes for patients



Goal 3

Enhance recovery to help Australians live well after stroke

Support hospital staff to improve comprehensive discharge planning for stroke survivors

Extend stroke resources and support tools to diverse communities

Improve our engagement with primary health and community sectors

Survivors live well after stroke



Goal

Goal 4

Champion research in stroke

Goal 5

Grow our impact and manage our charity effectively and efficiently

Advocate for increased stroke research funding

Sustainably diversify and grow our funding revenues and increase our profile

Increase our funding for and participation in stroke research

Attract the right people and support them with the systems they need to drive organisational performance

Develop and strengthen our research network partnerships

Strengthen our cultural diversity and build industry, academic and institutional partnerships

Action

Breakthroughs in stroke

A trusted and responsive charity

Result



Bill Deering and Sharon McGowan, Stroke Foundation Chief Executive Officer

What a difference time makes

Father-of-four Bill Deering is living because of breakthrough stroke treatment and increased awareness of F.A.S.T. Bill, 45, has survived two strokes, 13 years apart.

“When I suffered my first stroke I went to bed instead of going to hospital and I didn’t get treatment for 20 hours, which left me with permanent disabilities.

I couldn’t walk unaided for two years following my stroke, and I suffered cognitive problems along with weight gain and depression.

When I had my second stroke (in 2017) my wife immediately recognised the signs and called triple zero (000).

I actually died twice on the way to the hospital, but was given thrombolysis – or clot busting drugs within an hour.

This prompt treatment saved my life.







I started feeling better and talking within hours.

I am very lucky.”





How to get more involved

-  **Give time** – become a volunteer.
-  **Raise funds** – hold a community fundraising event.
-  **Speak up** – join our advocacy team.
-  **Leave a lasting legacy** – with 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**
-  **[/strokefoundation](https://www.facebook.com/strokefoundation)**
-  **[@strokefdn](https://twitter.com/strokefdn)**
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