



14 May 2008

**MS AUSTRALIA WELCOMES ASSISTANCE FOR CARERS AND LISTING OF NEW  
DRUG IN BUDGET**

**MS Australia (MSA) today said it was encouraged by the Rudd Government's first Budget last night.**

The Budget included the re-announcement of the listing of the drug *Tysabri* on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), which will take effect from July 1.

In particular, MSA has welcomed the additional assistance for carers. The Carer Bonus will continue as \$1,000 for Carer Payment recipients and \$600 for Carer Allowance recipients, in addition to \$100 million funding for supported accommodation announced by the Prime Minister on 4 May.

"These are important measures to support the people who tirelessly care for people with a disability in our communities," said MSA's Manager of Policy & Community Partnerships, Alan Blackwood.

While there was no new money announced last night for the disability sector, MSA is also encouraged by the Federal Government's commitment to the National Disability Strategy to support people living with a disability and their families.

"Yesterday's Budget was very encouraging as it shows the Government is taking the issues of people with disabilities seriously. We implore the Government to continue this and do more to improve the lives of people with disabilities and their families," Mr Blackwood said.

"In particular, we are looking forward to improved respite and accommodation services in the future."

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is the most common disease of the central nervous system among young Australians aged 20 to 40. There are 18,000 Australians living with MS and five people are diagnosed with the disease every working day. The average age of diagnosis is 30 and three times as many women as men are affected. Common symptoms include loss of coordination, speech difficulties, blurred or double vision, numbness, pins and needles and extreme tiredness. There is no known cure for MS.

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