



Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie

Deputy Leader of The Nationals
Minister for Regional Services
Minister for Sport
Minister for Local Government and Decentralisation
Senator for Victoria

RefNo: MC19-002824

25 MAR 2019

Ms Deidre Mackechnie
Chief Executive Officer
MS Australia
Level 19, 100 Miller Street
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

Dear Ms Mackechnie

Thank you for your letter of 11 December 2018 enclosing the three Roadmaps for Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and outlining the nine associated initiatives to address MS in Australia. My sincere apologies for the delay in responding.

The Liberal National Government recognises the significant impact that MS can have on those affected by the condition as well as on their families and carers. The work of MS Australia in providing support and services for Australians affected by MS, combined with the work undertaken by MS Research Australia to fund research into better detection, treatments and finding a cure for MS, is highly commended and appreciated.

The Roadmaps are a good example of the collaborative relationship that exists between your organisations and the benefits to be gained through your combined knowledge, expertise and reach. The nine initiatives, outlined across the three Roadmaps, are comprehensive and cover a variety of issues of concern to the health portfolio, as well as for other government portfolio areas.

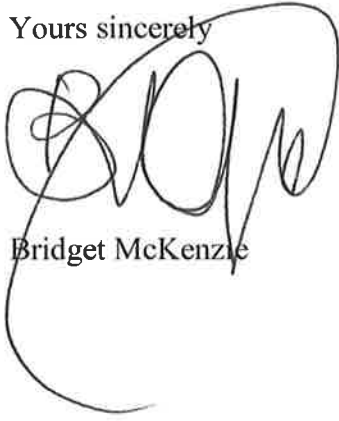
Of particular interest is a focus on research. The Government recognises the importance of investment into basic and clinical research to provide greater opportunities for major breakthroughs in medicine and health interventions, including in the prevention and management of MS. We understand clinical research provides our best opportunity to identify better ways of treating and managing chronic conditions and ideally finding cures for conditions like MS.

With this in mind, the Government is committed to maintaining a robust national clinical research agenda, including through the provision of \$825,000 over three years (2016-17 to 2018-19) to MS Research Australia; significant expenditure provided annually to support MS projects through National Health and Medical Research Council grants; an ongoing commitment to create and retain a highly skilled research workforce in Australia; and in excess of \$1.3 million provided from the Medical Research Future Fund to support MS research.

This funding and any future investments will assist to accelerate the progress of Australian MS research towards understanding the cause of MS and contributing to the international efforts to address MS. In addition, it provides a valuable opportunity for the development and implementation of evidence-based interventions to improve the lives of all Australians impacted by MS.

Thank you for providing me with the three MS Roadmaps and for outlining the nine associated initiatives proposed to improve the lives of Australians living with MS.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bridget McKenzie', with a large, sweeping flourish extending downwards and to the left.

Bridget McKenzie