



# KEY FACTS & FIGURES ABOUT MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic disease that attacks the central nervous system (the brain, spinal cord and optic nerves). The progress, severity and specific symptoms of MS cannot be predicted. MS is a lifelong disease for which a cure is yet to be found; however, doctors and scientists are making discoveries about the treatment and management of MS every day.

## GENERAL FACTS ABOUT MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS



More than 33,300  
Australians live with MS



Over 2.8 million  
people are living  
with MS worldwide



1-2 Australians are  
diagnosed with MS  
every day



Average age of  
diagnosis is between  
20-40 years



MS affects more  
young adults than  
any other acquired  
chronic neurological  
disease



3 out of 4  
Australians  
diagnosed with MS  
are women

## FORMS OF MS AT DIAGNOSIS

**85%** RELAPSING REMITTING MS (RRMS)

**12%** PRIMARY PROGRESSIVE MS (PPMS)

**3%** UNKNOWN MS DISEASE TYPE

Many people diagnosed with RRMS will eventually develop secondary progressive MS (SPMS).

## COMMON SYMPTOMS OF MS

The symptoms of MS can be both visible and invisible to others, are unpredictable and vary from person to person and from time to time in the same person.



# THE ECONOMIC AND PERSONAL COST OF MS



MS is estimated to have cost the Australian community **\$2.449 billion in 2021.**



In 2021, the average cost of MS\* per person was **\$73,457.**

\*Comprising both individual and societal costs



Quadruple that of a long-term cancer survivor.

Of all the various categories that comprise the total cost of MS, lost wages now account for only **29% of the economic burden** of MS compared to almost **50% in 2010.**



On average, in 2017, the **quality of life** of people with MS in Australia is **31% less** than that of the overall Australian population.



Quality of life for people with MS who are living with **severe disability is 41% lower** compared to people with MS with no disability.

This substantially reduced quality of life is primarily driven by the impact of MS on **pain, independent living, mental health and relationships.**



## THE PREVALENCE OF MS

The prevalence of MS in Australia has increased from **103.7 per 100,000 people in 2017** to **131.1 per 100,000 people in 2021.** This increase in prevalence is most likely due to changes in exposure to known MS risk factors.



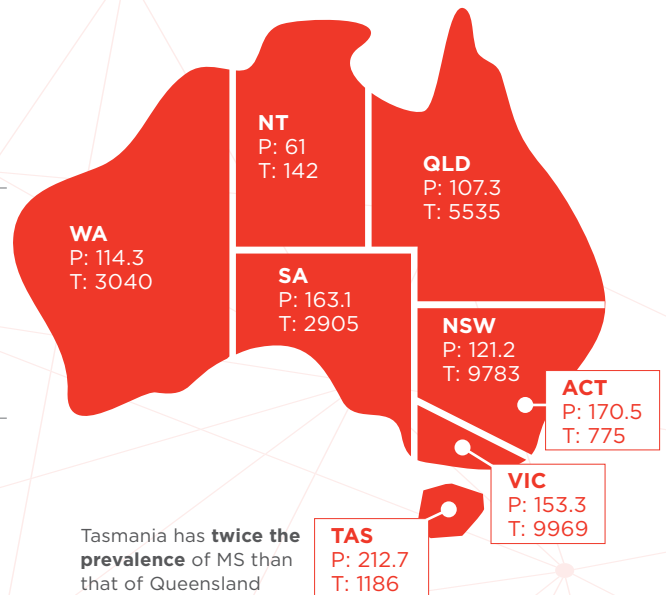
Global experts believe that addressing the impact of **smoking, Vitamin D deficiency, obesity and glandular fever** could prevent 60% of MS cases.

The **further** away from the equator people live the **higher the prevalence** of MS.

**62%** of people with MS are using a disease modifying therapy\*, **an increase of 35%** since 2010.



\*A drug designed to reduce the number and severity of relapses and slow or halt the progression of their MS



If there was a vaccine against the Epstein-Barr virus\* **90% of MS cases might be prevented.**



\*the virus that causes glandular fever

Tasmania has **twice the prevalence** of MS than that of Queensland

Prevalence (P) of MS per 100,000 people and total number (T) of people with MS

### References:

- 1 Health Economic Impact of Multiple Sclerosis in Australia 2021 report, commissioned by MS Australia and prepared by the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, University of Tasmania, February 2023
- 2 Health Economic Impact of Multiple Sclerosis in Australia 2017 report, commissioned by MS Research Australia and prepared by the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, University of Tasmania, August 2018
- 3 Environmental modifiable risk factors for multiple sclerosis: Report from the 2016ECTRIMS focused workshop, Amato M. et al, Multiple Sclerosis Journal, Vol 24, Issue 5, 2018
- 4 Atlas of MS 2020, Multiple Sclerosis International Federation, September 2020, www.atlasofms.org