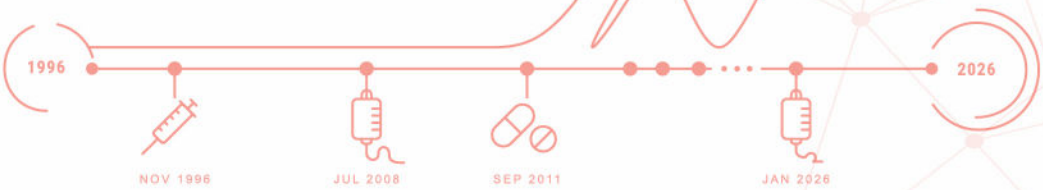
MS AUSTRALIA RESEARCH ADVOCACY CURE

MEDIA RELEASE



Thirty years of MS medicines have delivered billions in health and societal value

MS Australia calls for sustained PBS access to high-efficacy therapies and investment in better treatments

MS Australia is calling on the Australian Government to protect affordable access to high-efficacy multiple sclerosis (MS) medicines, following a new report estimating that three decades of Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme (PBS) subsidised disease-modifying therapies (DMTs) have generated more than $21.6 billion in health and societal value.

Commissioned by MS Australia and prepared by THEMA Consulting, the report, *Assessing the value of 30 years of disease-modifying therapies for multiple sclerosis in Australia,* estimates that MS DMTs helped avoid approximately 80,866 relapses between 1996 and 2025.

The report documents how DMTs have transformed MS care, reducing relapses, slowing disability progression and expanding opportunities for personalised treatment, with modelling revealing a net monetary benefit of approximately $13.2 billion after accounting for treatment expenditure, expressed in 2025 Australian dollars.

Across the full period, the report estimates that every $1 spent on MS DMTs returned $2.58 in health, economic and societal benefits.

The report also highlights significant unmet need: limited treatment options for progressive MS, and disability that can accumulate despite relapse control, alongside the substantial ongoing impact of MS on employment, families and quality of life.

MS Australia says the findings reinforce the need to recognise effective treatment as an investment in people's futures, rather than simply a cost to the health budget.

MS Australia Chief Executive Officer Rohan Greenland said Australia must protect the progress made since the first MS DMT was listed on the PBS in November 1996.

"For people living with MS, access to effective treatment can change what the future looks like.

Suite 3.01, 18 Flour Mill Way, Summer Hill NSW 2130 | 1300 010 158 | media@msaustralia.org.au | www.msaustralia.org.au

"Reducing relapses and slowing disability progression can help people maintain their independence, continue working and take part in family and community life; life-changing outcomes that must be central to how Australia values and invests in MS medicines," Mr Greenland said.

The report estimates 24,000 people received PBS-subsidised MS DMTs in 2025 and describes a significant shift towards newer treatments and increasingly personalised care over the past three decades.

Its review found that newer high-efficacy medicines generally provide greater benefits than earlier treatments, but no single treatment performs best across all outcomes.

MS Australia's Head of Research Dr Tennille Luker said the report reinforces why access to a range of treatments matters: benefits differ across therapies and outcomes, and treatment decisions must balance disease control with safety, tolerability and individual circumstances.

"Treatment choice is not a luxury; it is fundamental to personalised MS care.

"People living with MS and their neurologists need access to a wide range of high-efficacy treatments, alongside other appropriate options, so decisions can reflect individual disease activity, safety, treatment goals and preferences," Dr Luker said.

Drawing on the report, MS Australia is calling on the Australian Government to:

- **Protect sustained, affordable PBS access to a broad range of MS treatments**, including high-efficacy therapies, so people living with MS and their neurologists can choose treatment according to individual clinical needs.
- **Preserve individualised treatment pathways**, including early high-efficacy treatment where clinically appropriate and flexibility to change therapy when effectiveness, safety or personal circumstances require it.
- **Ensure assessment and pricing arrangements recognise demonstrated clinical advances and broader patient value**, while maintaining affordability and supporting sustained access to existing and emerging therapies.
- **Invest in treatments for unmet need**, particularly progressive MS, progression independent of relapses, and therapies that protect and repair the nervous system.

Despite substantial advances in relapsing MS, the report finds the evidence base and treatment options for progressive MS remain comparatively limited.

It also highlights that controlling relapses does not necessarily stop all disability accumulation, underscoring the need for treatments that address progression and repair damage.

Dr Luker said Australia needs sustained investment in therapies that prevent progression, protect nerve cells and repair damage.

“Thirty years of progress has transformed MS treatment, but it has not delivered a cure or effective options for everyone.

“People living with progressive MS, and those whose disability continues to worsen despite treatment, cannot be left behind,” Dr Luker said.

The report also examines the broader costs of MS, including lost productivity, reduced earnings, early departure from the workforce and unpaid care provided by family members.

MS Australia says these broader impacts deserve greater recognition in treatment assessment and funding decisions.

Mr Greenland says the value of an MS medicine cannot be understood through its price alone.

“We must also consider what effective treatment can help preserve: independence, participation, time with family and the ability to plan for the future.

“Affordable medicines and sustainable access must go together so we need funding arrangements that recognise meaningful treatment advances and protect the choices people living with MS rely on,” Mr Greenland said.

The new report launches in the same year that concerns were raised about the potential removal of two high-efficacy MS medicines relied upon by thousands of Australians from the PBS.

The Australian Government subsequently confirmed that Ocrevus and Kesimpta would remain available through the PBS, while also calling on the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to conduct a rapid review of all PBS-listed MS medications.

With the Department’s findings and recommendations due to be made public in early 2027, Mr Greenland warns against any measures that would undermine thirty years of progress.

"Australia has helped make three decades of MS treatment progress possible.

"The task now is to protect those gains and invest in the breakthroughs still urgently needed," Mr Greenland said.

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MEDIA CONTACTS:
media@msaustralia.org.au
Lisa Montague – 0412 002 544
Jayme Markus – 0401 944 905
www.msaustralia.org.au

About the report

Assessing the value of 30 years of disease-modifying therapies for multiple sclerosis in Australia was commissioned by MS Australia and prepared by THEMA Consulting. The report examines the clinical evidence, PBS access and reimbursement arrangements, treatment utilisation and the economic and societal value of DMTs for MS in Australia over the past 30 years.

About MS Australia

MS Australia is Australia's national multiple sclerosis (MS) not-for-profit organisation that empowers researchers to identify ways to treat, prevent and cure MS, seeks sustained and systemic policy change via advocacy, and acts as the national champion for Australia's community of people affected by MS.

MS Australia represents and collaborates with its state and territory MS Member Organisations, people with MS, their carers, families and friends and various national and international bodies to:

- Fund, coordinate, educate and advocate for MS research as part of the worldwide effort to solve MS
- Provide the latest evidence-based information and resources
- Help meet the needs of people affected by MS.