

PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 2026-27

SUMMARY

Art by Circular Blooms, an art project by Deanna Renee, a person living with MS and a member of MS Australia's Lived Experience Expert Panel. Deanna creates digital art using MRI scans to challenge misconceptions about MS.



Better support for people living with MS

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) remains one of the most common causes of neurological disability in the young adult population (aged 18-40 years) with over 2.8 million people affected worldwide. More than 37,756 Australians live with MS and over 7.6 million Australians know someone or have a loved one with this potentially debilitating disease.



Three times as many women have MS than men. Symptoms vary between people and can come and go; they can include severe pain, walking difficulties, debilitating fatigue, partial blindness and thinking and memory problems. For some, MS is characterised by periods of relapse and remission, while for others it has a progressive pattern of disability. MS can reduce quality of life, primarily driven by the impact of MS on pain, independent living, mental health and relationships.

MS Australia's pre-budget submission is framed against a backdrop of an increasing rise in MS prevalence across Australia and the current cost of living crisis which significantly impacts the lives of people living with MS who are already struggling with the high costs of living with chronic disease and disability.



People living with MS need improved access to early diagnosis, access to life changing MS nurse care, improved and expanded disability supports and improved access to and funding for aged care. Funding for improved neurological data and a Neurological and Neuromuscular Health Research Mission will further support improved diagnosis and treatments and ultimately, a cure for MS.



MS Australia's 2026-27 Pre-Budget Submission highlights key funding priorities to improve the lives of Australians living with MS. MS Australia advocates for strategic investments in research, healthcare, disability, and aged care to address the growing personal and economic impact of MS.

Our submission has four asks that will improve the lives of people living with MS and reduce the economic impact of MS on the Australian health, disability, social services and aged care systems, including:

1. MORE FUNDING FOR MS RESEARCH AND DATA

There is a critical gap in funding for research to prevent people from developing MS and to shorten diagnosis time.



- **\$8 million** over five years to fund a National MS Biobank to support Australian studies towards early detection and prevention of MS.

There is a critical gap in coordinated research and data for neurological and neuromuscular conditions



- **\$300 million** over ten years for a Neurological and Neuromuscular Health Research Mission within the MRFF.
- **\$1.3 million** over two years for the AIHW to undertake neurological data improvement activities.

2. IMPROVED ACCESS TO MS NURSES

The number of MS nurses is declining and one-third of Australians living with MS do not have access to life-changing MS nurse care and have consistently worse health outcomes.



- **\$6.5 million** to employ an additional 65 MS Nurses to improve access for the people living with MS.
- **\$1 million** to develop an MS Nurses National Strategy to strengthen and expand the MS nursing workforce.
- **\$3 million** over four years to fund an MS Nurses pilot project.
- **\$120,000** to develop an MS Nursing microcredential and provide scholarships for nurses undertaking study.
- **\$120,000** over five years to develop an MS Nursing microcredential.
- **\$90,000** over three years to provide ten scholarships for nurses undertaking the MS Nursing microcredential

3. BETTER SUPPORTS FOR PEOPLE WITH MS LIVING WITH DISABILITY

A better NDIS for people living with MS



- Funding to create a flexible, participant-focused and sustainable pricing mode for the NDIS that reflects real costs and encourages innovation and quality service delivery.
- Funding to recruit, train, upskill and maintain a sufficient NDIA workforce and improved disability awareness and improved disability awareness and understanding across all government agencies.
- Funding to improve NDIS planning and supports so they are evidence-based and focused on the needs of participants, including improved understanding of the needs of people living with MS
- Funding for improved housing and living supports so that people with disability can maintain their independence and choose the living arrangement that best meets their needs and long-term and short-term goals.

People living with disability should be supported by a highly skilled disability workforce



- Funding to attract, train, upskill and maintain a high-quality disability workforce to meet the needs of people living with disability.

People with MS living with disability need access to appropriate assistive technology



- Funding to develop a single, nationally consistent assistive technology program to support people with a disability who are not eligible for the NDIS.

People with disability deserve to live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation and to have adequate support to meet the costs of living with disability



- Funding to support an immediate increase in the rates of the Disability Support Pension, New Start Allowance and JobSeeker Payments and a more person-centred focus on the delivery of income support payments to people with disability.
- Funding to support the development of a new set of Australian poverty measures that include a supplementary poverty line to capture the additional costs of living with disability.
- Funding to support the timely and effective implementation of the recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission.

4. INCREASED FUNDING FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH MS IN AGED CARE

Older people living with MS are overlooked in the Aged Care system which negatively affects their wellbeing and quality of life. They need timely access to supports and funding to meet their MS specific needs.



- Funding to meet the needs of the over 220,000 older Australians waiting for Support at Home packages and assessments including:
 - » Funding for additional Support at Home packages, including removing rationing of packages over time
 - » Funding for improving, training and expanding the aged care assessment workforce
 - » Funding for improved and timely data on wait times for packages and assessments
- Funding to ensure equity of services and funding for older people living with disability including:
 - » Expanding the aged care service list to include supports that allow people to maintain independence, choice and control
 - » Support for aged care providers to train and upskill staff and improve policies and procedures
 - » Increasing the levels of funding available under the Support at Home Program so that funding levels match the NDIS and/or allowing care recipients to top up their aged care funding with NDIS supports
- Funding to implement the six recommendations of the Inspector General's review of My Aged Care