

NEW REPORT: MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS ECONOMIC BURDEN EXCEEDS \$3 BILLION AS PREVALENCE SOARS IN AUSTRALIA

3 December 2025: The cost of multiple sclerosis (MS) in Australia has surpassed \$3 billion a year for the first time, driven by a substantial rise in prevalence, according to a major new report.

The report, [Multiple Sclerosis Prevalence and Health Economic Impact in Australia 2025](#), commissioned by MS Australia and produced in collaboration with the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, University of Tasmania, reveals that a record 37,756 Australians are now living with the chronic neurological disease – a 13.3% increase in just three years since 2021.

Since the first report in 2010, the number of Australians living with MS has risen by 77.4%, while prevalence has risen 45.5%, now at 139.2 per 100,000 Australians – up from 95.6 per 100,000 in 2010.

The total economic burden of MS reached \$3.004 billion in 2024, underscoring the immense financial pressure the disease places on individuals and the economy.

The findings also highlight a striking health disparity, as people living with MS face health-related costs that are approximately seven times higher than the national average, with the mean annual cost per person reaching \$79,581.

The largest drivers of this cost are lost employment and productivity losses, which account for a societal loss of \$846 million, followed by the cost of disease modifying therapies (DMTs) at \$592 million.

The employment crisis is severe, with 58.2% of those retired reporting they did so specifically due to the impacts of MS. Quality of life is also significantly diminished.

A key measure of health-related quality of life, known as Health State Utility (HSU), ranges from 0 (worst health) to 1 (perfect health). Australians living with MS have an average HSU score of 0.60, compared to 0.80 for the general population, underscoring the substantial toll MS takes on everyday life. This declines further for those living with severe disability.

Professor Bruce Taylor, Neurologist and Academic Lead at the Menzies Institute, said the findings reflect more than an economic challenge. They represent nearly 38,000 Australians living with a chronic, incurable disease.

“MS is striking Australians in their most productive years, leading to significant economic and personal costs through early retirement and reduced quality of life,” Professor Taylor said.

“While effective treatments are available, we urgently need stronger systemic support and prevention strategies to meet the growing number of diagnoses.”

In response to the escalating crisis, MS Australia is calling on the government to act immediately on the report’s recommendations, with a focus on improving care, access, and research.

Rohan Greenland, CEO of MS Australia, said the gap between the needs of the MS community and the resources available is widening, and urged the government to recognise MS as a progressive, lifelong condition rather than an episodic illness.

“We need to keep improving the NDIS, which still falls short for people with complex, progressive neurological conditions.

“Investing in at least 65 additional MS Nurses across Australia is a critical and cost-effective step to ensure everyone can access vital disease management support,” Mr Greenland said.

Dr Tennille Luker, Head of Research at MS Australia, said the sustained rise in MS prevalence highlights the need for a proactive research response, focused on both treatment and prevention.

“While we continue to champion research into neuroprotection and myelin repair to slow or stop disability progression, we must also increase funding for research focused on the prevention of MS.

“Understanding and mitigating key risk factors, like those linked to changes in sunlight exposure and adolescent obesity, is essential to stem this rising tide of prevalence for future generations, Dr Luker said.”

Key Recommendations for Government:

1. **Focus on Prevention:** Increase funding for research focusing on the prevention of MS, including risk factors, biomarkers and lifestyle interventions.
2. **Support Earlier Diagnosis and Intervention:** Allocate resources to support earlier diagnosis of MS and earlier intervention to prevent or delay disability progression.
3. **Advance Neuroprotection and Myelin Repair:** Invest in new and promising interventions that promote neuroprotection and myelin repair, with timely assessment for approval and subsidy.
4. **Increase MS Nurse Care:** Resources should be allocated to employ at least 65 additional MS Nurses nationally, ensuring all people living with MS have access to this vital service, which translates to immediate cost savings through improved health outcomes.
5. **Empower People with MS to Lead a Brain-Healthy Lifestyle:** Continue investment in programs and awareness initiatives that promote brain health and modifiable lifestyle factors.

6. **Workforce Retention Programs:** Implement early support programs designed to help people living with MS manage their symptoms and remain in the workforce, reducing the staggering cost of productivity loss.
7. **Continue to improve NDIS Support:** The Australian Government must improve the National Disability Insurance Scheme to better support people with MS, including an improved early intervention pathway and flexible, sustainable pricing models that understand progressive neurodegenerative diseases.

About the Report: [The Multiple Sclerosis Prevalence and Health Economic Impact in Australia 2025](#) report is the third major publication on the cost of multiple sclerosis in Australia, produced by the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, and commissioned by MS Australia. The primary data source is the Australian MS Longitudinal Study (AMSLS).

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