



RESEARCH
ADVOCACY
CURE

2026 RESEARCH SNAPSHOT



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 Member Organisations, people with MS, their carers, families and friends and various national and international bodies to:



Fund MS research as part of the worldwide effort to solve MS



Publish and promote the latest evidence-based information and resources



Support the needs of those affected by MS

ABOUT GRANTS

AUSTRALIA



MS Australia has a robust and transparent research strategy that involves scientific experts thoroughly critiquing all our research to ensure that we are targeting the research priorities identified by the MS community in Australia.

The International Research Review Board serves as a scientific advisory group to MS Australia. They assist in identifying the strengths of Australian research and help ensure that MS Australia's strategy complements the global MS research effort.

Our Research Management Council consists of a multidisciplinary team that oversees the peer-review process of all funding applications and funding allocations for investigator-driven research. Every research application is evaluated on both its scientific merit and relevance to MS. The grant process is conducted with integrity and transparency, and is modelled on the most stringent grant review systems worldwide, including the Australian Government's National Health and Medical Research Council review process.

For more information on the scientific committees, research strategy and funded projects please visit www.msaustralia.org.au

CAUSES & PREVENTION

GENETICS & EPIDEMIOLOGY

THE FLOREY INSTITUTE OF NEUROSCIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH, VIC

Associate Professor Justin Rubio is investigating whether inflammation is a cause or result of more gene mutations in MS lesions.

THE FLOREY INSTITUTE OF NEUROSCIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH, VIC

Mr Alex Eisner is investigating how human herpesviruses influence MS by chemically modifying DNA.

WALTER AND ELIZA HALL INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH, VIC

Dr Hamish King is working toward solving the complex genetic pathways that contribute to MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND, QLD

Dr Carla Proietti is exploring how genes, Epstein-Barr virus and the immune system interact in MS.

IMMUNOLOGY

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

Dr Jian Tan is investigating whether dietary 'branched-chain' amino acids increase disease severity or progression in a laboratory model of MS.

NEUROBIOLOGY

CURTIN UNIVERSITY, WA

Dr Brittney Lins is exploring whether MS risk factors such as low vitamin D and EBV infection exert their effects through interactions with copper.

DR BRITTNEY LINS
CURTIN UNIVERSITY



SOCIAL & APPLIED RESEARCH

DR HAJAR MAZAHERY
DEAKIN UNIVERSITY



DEVELOPING BETTER TREATMENTS



DR CARLA PROIETTI
THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

THE KIDS RESEARCH INSTITUTE AUSTRALIA, WA

Dr Kimberley Parkin is exploring the link between gut health and the immune system in MS by studying the interactions of bacterial products with immune cells in MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, VIC

Dr James Hilton is optimising metal compounds for the treatment of neurodegeneration in progressive MS.

MONASH UNIVERSITY, VIC

Dr Jessica Redmond is investigating how ageing impacts MS progression and quality of life in MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, VIC

Dr Winston Dzau is exploring blood biomarkers of MS progression and their response to treatment.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

Professor Alexander Klistorner is exploring MS therapies and their effects on smouldering inflammation in the brain.

MENZIES INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, TAS

Professor Kaylene Young is investigating blood vessel vulnerabilities as a target to combat disease progression in MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

Dr Tal Koren is developing more accurate and automated ways to track spinal cord damage in MS.

*commencing in January 2027

BOND UNIVERSITY, QLD

Dr Jacob Thorstensen is developing an innovative intervention using combined magnetic brain stimulation and electrical nerve stimulation to combat muscle weakness and fatigue in MS.

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY, VIC

Dr Hajar Mazahery is investigating how macronutrient intake and quality, energy intake, and obesity relate to MS risk and progression.

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND, QLD

Associate Professor Anna Hatton is developing Vibrotactile Insole Technology for balance rehabilitation in people with MS.

A CURE FOR MS VIA REPAIR & REGENERATION OF CELLS

THE FLOREY INSTITUTE OF NEUROSCIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH, VIC

Dr Samantha Barton is identifying the genes that drive myelin production using 'mini brains'.



DR SAMANTHA BARTON
THE FLOREY INSTITUTE OF NEUROSCIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH

MS BETHANY NICOL
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE



THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, VIC

Ms Bethany Nicol is uncovering how a key signalling pathway within cells supports myelin formation in the brain and spinal cord.

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG, NSW

Dr Olivia Wills is exploring how a lifestyle-based weight loss intervention affects the mix of bacteria (microbiome) in the mouth in people living with MS, which may play a role in inflammation and neurological disease.

MAJOR COLLABORATIONS/PLATFORMS

INCUBATOR GRANT

SCHOLARSHIP

PROJECT GRANT

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

PAIRED FELLOWSHIP

SENIOR FELLOWSHIP

TRAVEL

GENETICS & EPIDEMIOLOGY

WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND NZ

ANZgene is a major collaboration mapping the genetic make-up of people with MS, to identify which genes influence MS susceptibility and progression.

MENZIES INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, TAS

Dr Xin Lin is working toward finding biological markers of MS for better diagnosis and prognosis.

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND, QLD

Professor Denise Doolan is investigating the diagnosis of MS based on Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) proteome screening.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE, SA

Dr David Stacey is testing a new way to study MS risk by comparing immune and viral markers in people with different genetic risk profiles, before MS symptoms appear.

MENZIES INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, TAS

Dr Nicholas Blackburn is studying families that have many relatives with MS to learn how MS develops.

THE FLOREY INSTITUTE OF NEUROSCIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH, VIC

Associate Professor Justin Rubio is investigating drug targets for progressive MS using advanced genetic analyses.

GARVAN INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH, NSW

Dr Seyhan Yazar is investigating early signs of MS using cellular signatures together with clinical characteristics to help with earlier diagnosis.

WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND INTERNATIONALLY

MS Australia is co-leading a landmark international initiative to develop the first coordinated global research agenda for the prevention of MS.

IMMUNOLOGY

WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA

The EBV in MS Platform brings together Australian researchers investigating the role of EBV in MS, and the potential to target EBV to prevent or treat MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, WA

Dr Stephanie Trend is exploring what is triggering immune reactions in people with MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE, SA

Ms Megan Monaghan is exploring markers present on CD4+ T cells to uncover a specific type of immune cell that causes damage in MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

Associate Professor Umaimainthan Palendira is using advanced tools to map immune cell types, locations and interactions in MS and non-MS brain lesions to better understand the disease process.

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, WA

MSWA

Dr Stephanie Trend is investigating the functions of a type of white blood cell and how they respond to MS treatments.

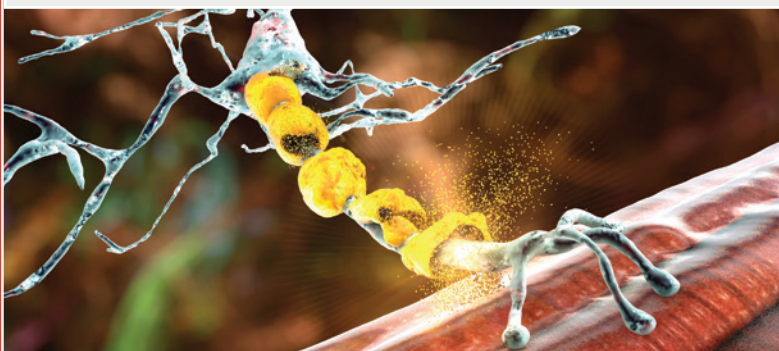
WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND INTERNATIONALLY

MS Australia is co-leading a landmark international initiative to develop the first coordinated global research agenda for the prevention of MS.



THE FLOREY INSTITUTE OF NEUROSCIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH, VIC

Associate Professor Justin Rubio is using human genomics to identify drug targets for progressive MS.



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NEUROBIOLOGY

WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA

The MS Australia Brain Bank, based at The University of Sydney, is securing valuable MS tissue from donors across Australia, to be used by researchers to advance our understanding of the neuropathology of MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

Professor Alexander Klistorner is unravelling the mechanisms of progressive MS.

MENZIES INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, TAS

Dr Alastair Fortune is investigating how brain vascular cell function differs in people with MS compared to people without MS.

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY, QLD

Associate Professor Justin Kavanagh is exploring how MS affects nerves that control muscles.

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY, NSW

MSWA

Dr Kai-Hei 'Franki' Tse is investigating the relationship between abnormal levels of a protein called tau in the brain, myelin loss and nerve damage in progressive MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

Dr Monokesh Sen is studying how extracellular vesicles might help communicate with and support myelin-producing cells.

WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND INTERNATIONALLY

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MENZIES INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, TAS

Professor Kaylene Young is investigating pathways to protect and repair the brain and spinal cord.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

Associate Professor Laura Piccio is targeting immune cells of the brain to enhance remyelination in MS.

THE FLOREY INSTITUTE OF NEUROSCIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH, VIC

Dr Sarabeth Stone is investigating a molecular control switch in brain cells in myelin repair.

THE FLOREY INSTITUTE OF NEUROSCIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH, VIC

Dr Jessica Fletcher is investigating how to stop MS progression.

WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA

PLATYPUS - PLatform Adaptive Trial for remYelination and neuroProtection in mUltiple Sclerosis - multi-arm, multi-stage (MAMS) clinical trial which will test repurposed drugs to help people with progressive MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

Dr Monokesh Sen is investigating the role of particles released by immune cells in myelin repair in progressive MS.

MENZIES INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, TAS

Dr Jessica Fletcher is investigating the Olig2 protein inside myelin-producing cells to find ways to selectively boost myelin repair.

THE FLOREY INSTITUTE OF NEUROSCIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH, VIC

Ms Michele Binder is developing a novel therapy based on the MERTK gene to promote myelin repair in people with MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

Professor Alexander Klistorner is testing remyelination therapies for their effectiveness in preventing damage caused by slow-burning inflammation in MS.

MONASH UNIVERSITY, VIC

Mr Jack McDonald is studying drugs that target the GPR17 protein found on immature myelin-producing cells to understand how it contributes to myelin repair.

SOCIAL & APPLIED RESEARCH

WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA

The Australian MS Longitudinal Study (AMSLS) is tracking the practical issues in the lives of people affected by MS, including quality of life, economic impact and employment.

MENZIES INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, TAS

Dr Julie Campbell is measuring the economic impacts of MS to aid resourcing.

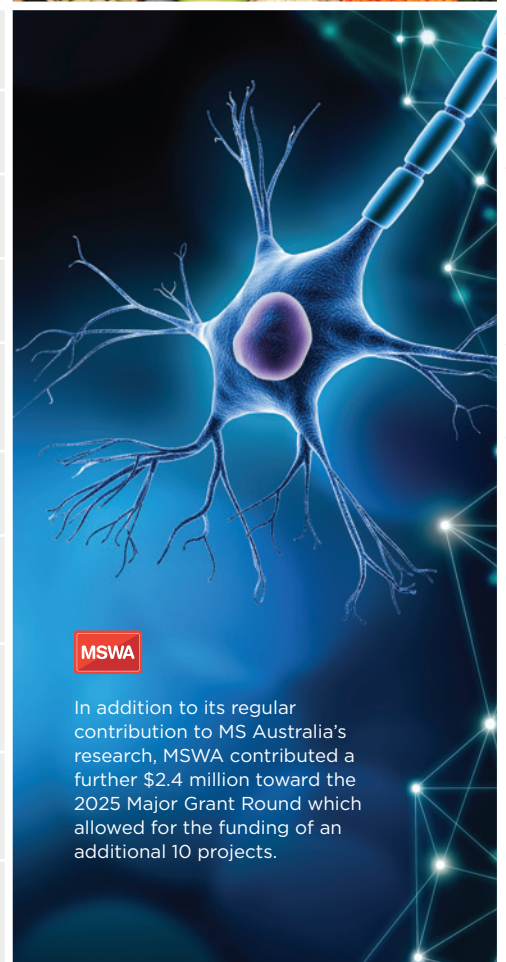
MONASH UNIVERSITY, VIC

MSWA

Professor Susan Davis AO is studying the impact of common midlife circumstances and menopause on the quality of life of women with MS.

WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND INTERNATIONALLY

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MSWA

In addition to its regular contribution to MS Australia's research, MSWA contributed a further \$2.4 million toward the 2025 Major Grant Round which allowed for the funding of an additional 10 projects.

ON-GOING PROJECTS FUNDED BY

DEVELOPING BETTER TREATMENTS

GENETICS & EPIDEMIOLOGY

WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND NZ

The PrevANZ Vitamin D Prevention Trial is measuring whether vitamin D can prevent MS in people at high risk of developing the disease.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, VIC

Dr Sifat Sharmin is working toward preventing disability in children with MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

Associate Professor Anthony Don is developing a blood test to predict and track therapeutic response in MS.

IMMUNOLOGY

WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA

The EBV in MS Platform brings together Australian researchers investigating the role of EBV in MS, and the potential to target EBV to prevent or treat MS.

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY, QLD

Professor Simon Broadley is leading a clinical trial of rituximab to reduce the development of other autoimmune diseases during alemtuzumab treatment for MS (RAMBLE trial).

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, ACT

Associate Professor Anne Bruestle is exploring the information blood cells provide, to potentially discover factors that could be used as biomarkers for MS activity or treatment effectiveness.

THE FLOREY INSTITUTE OF NEUROSCIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH, VIC

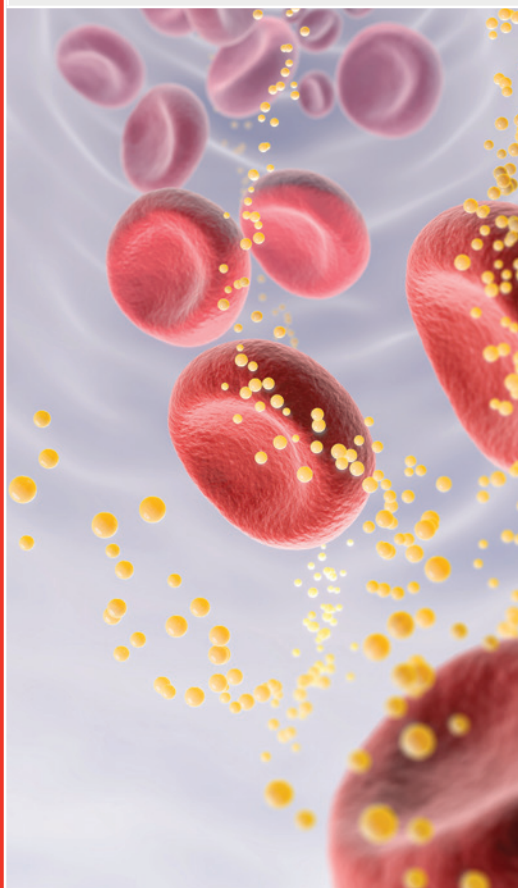
Professor Trevor Kilpatrick seeks to understand how Mertk protein affects MS and determine which people might benefit most from treatments targeting this protein.

MSWA

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, VIC

Dr Vivien Li is developing a new way to treat MS using a person's own blood immune cells.

MSWA



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NEUROBIOLOGY

WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA

Haematologists and neurologists around Australia are running the Australian MS Haematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant (AHSCT) Register. They track the effectiveness of this chemotherapy treatment with bone marrow transplants to treat MS.

WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND INTERNATIONALLY

MS Australia is a managing member of the International Progressive MS Alliance to accelerate treatments for progressive MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

Dr Heidi Beadnall is using automated brain MRI measures to aid decision-making in MS clinical practice.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, NSW

Associate Professor Gila Moalem-Taylor is developing a new therapeutic approach for neuropathic pain in MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

Dr Chenyu Wang and Professor Michael Barnett are using advanced computer systems and AI imaging for disease management.

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY, QLD

Associate Professor Justin Kavanagh is investigating whether electrical muscle stimulation improves motor symptoms in MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, NSW

Dr Samuel Klistorner is using advanced technology to detect subtle changes in MS lesions and identify biomarkers for early detection of disease progression.

MENZIES INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, TAS

Dr Yi Chao Foong is investigating the effectiveness of disease modifying therapies in older people with MS.

MONASH UNIVERSITY, VIC

Dr Wei Yeh is studying immune therapies to prevent relapses and disability in MS and myelin oligodendrocyte glycoprotein antibody-associated disease (MOGAD).

MSWA

MONASH UNIVERSITY, VIC

Dr Daniel Merlo is using apps to measure changes in memory and thinking in people with MS who are over 50 years of age.

MSWA

MENZIES INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, TAS

Dr Valery Fuh-Ngwa is developing new ways to analyse health outcomes, comparing the effectiveness of different treatments in active MS, and studying progression of disability in people living with MS.

MSWA

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE, NSW

Dr Oun Al-iedani is developing an MRI model using artificial intelligence to monitor and predict MS progression.

MSWA

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, VIC

Dr Nathaniel Lizak is investigating the best way to use disease modifying therapies to prevent disability in MS.

SOCIAL & APPLIED RESEARCH

WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND NZ

The MS Australia Clinical Trials Network coordinates information about MS trials for the MS community.

WORKING ACROSS AUSTRALIA

InforMS is developing an online MS Patient-Centred Portal to facilitate self-management of healthcare by people with MS and shared decision-making with their care team.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, VIC

Ms Rebekah Allison Davenport is improving the clinical understanding of sexual dysfunction, depression and anxiety in MS.

MENZIES INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, TAS

Professor Ingrid van der Mei is improving outcomes for people with MS through digital technologies.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, VIC

Dr Steve Simpson-Yap is investigating diet quality and patient health outcomes over 10 years in people with MS.

MENZIES INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, TAS

Dr Laura Laslett is investigating pathways to treatments for better sleep in people with MS.

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG, NSW

Professor Yasmine Probst is conducting a lifestyle clinical trial for weight loss in adults living with MS.

MENZIES INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, TAS

Dr Laura Laslett is testing the use of smart watches and other devices to track sleeping patterns and MS symptoms daily in people with MS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, NSW

Associate Professor Yvonne Learmonth is co-designing an intervention and toolkit for MS healthcare professionals to promote exercise in people with MS.

MSWA

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, VIC

Associate Professor Litza Kiropoulos is evaluating a web-based program to support people with MS with mild to moderate depression.

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY, VIC

Dr Barbara Brayner is investigating the link between dietary fat and the risk of MS onset and progression.

MENZIES INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH, TAS

Dr Glen Henson is using health economics to advance our understanding of how MS impacts quality of life.

MSWA

In addition to its regular contribution to MS Australia's research, MSWA contributed a further \$2.4 million toward the 2025 Major Grant Round which allowed for the funding of an additional 10 projects.

A WORLD WITHOUT MS



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