

# Make SA Great: A plan for stronger stroke care

South Australia Election  
Platform 2018



[strokefoundation.org.au](http://strokefoundation.org.au)

*Adelaide stroke survivor Darlene McLeod and husband Don.*

# The challenge for South Australia

## The stroke challenge looms large in South Australia

Number of strokes: 4,868

Number of stroke survivors: 39,946  
(8% of Australia's stroke population)

Number of working age (under 65) stroke survivors: 11,984 (30%)

## Stroke risk in South Australia (% of total population)

High blood pressure:  
345,575 (19%)

High cholesterol:  
490,050 (27%)

Physical inactivity:  
854,336 (47%)

Stroke services in South Australia are variable – some parts are excellent and others have room for improvement.

But we can be great...



### First response



20% use of thrombolysis (clot busting) treatment compared to 13% nationally

67% of eligible patients arrived outside the critical 4.5 hour window for clot-busting treatment

### Hospital care



85% of patients receive stroke unit care compared to 69% nationally

43% of services have a Stroke Unit Coordinator compared to 57% nationally

Only 2 of 7 services routinely utilise best-practice clinical guidelines

### Returning home



71% of services provide standardised and early assessment for neuro-rehabilitation compared to 57% nationally

Increased risk of repeat hospitalisation from poor home transition planning:

39% – no written care plan

57% – insufficient post-rehabilitation information

51% – no risk factor medication

# At a glance

The Stroke Foundation is calling for the next South Australian Government to build on the work done to prevent, treat and beat stroke by investing an additional \$3.03 million over four years to deliver better healthcare for all South Australians.

**1.**

## **F.A.S.T. community education to reduce stroke and speed up treatment**

Empowering community volunteers to deliver the StrokeSafe and F.A.S.T. (Face, Arms, Speech, Time) messages across South Australia.

**Investment:** \$240,000 over four years (additional \$50,000 over four years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities).

**Result:** When someone suffers a stroke, every minute counts. F.A.S.T. access to treatment means a greater chance of recovery and decreased costs for our health system.

**2.**

## **South Australian Telestroke Network and reperfusion service**

Ensuring South Australians, no matter where they live, have access to the latest treatments in acute stroke management.

**Investment:** \$910,000 over four years (equipment and implementation support).

**Result:** More regional South Australians surviving, avoiding disability and recovering from stroke, reducing stroke's burden on our communities and the health system.

**3.**

## **Standing by stroke survivors and their families – SA Stroke Patient Follow-up Service**

An outbound telephone service reaching out to stroke survivors and carers once they return home.

**Investment:** \$1.4 million over four years.

**Result:** Ensures all stroke survivors and carers are connected with and supported to access the information, resources and services they need to manage their recovery and live well after stroke.

**4.**

## **Better quality stroke treatment and care for all South Australians**

Establish a South Australian 'Community of Practice' for stroke, providing clinical leadership and access to best-practice stroke care across the state.

**Investment:** \$480,000 over four years.

**Result:** Closing the gap between guidelines and practice to ensure ongoing, world's best, quality and safety of stroke services in South Australia.

# A call to action

Stroke can be prevented, it can be treated and it can be beaten, but only if patients are able to access high quality stroke treatment fast.

This year South Australians will experience almost 5000 strokes. Many of these will be experienced by people living in regional areas. Currently, there is no guarantee that all patients will have access to the high quality, evidence-based care we know saves lives and reduces disability. In fact, we know many will not.

**The next South Australian Government has an opportunity to deliver a better plan for stroke treatment and support in the state so more patients survive, avoid disability and recover.**

**The stroke challenge looms large in our state.**

**Stroke Foundation calls on the next South Australian Government to commit to action that will save lives and reduce disability.**

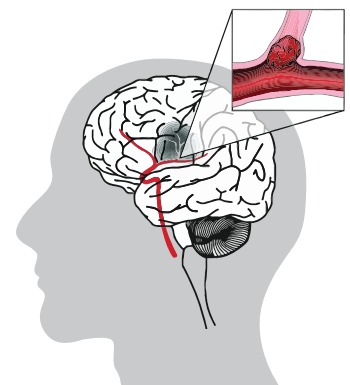
State Government investment has delivered results. Adelaide residents have access to some of the best time-critical stroke treatments in the country. Now we must ensure these treatments are maximised and South Australians living in the rest of the state have the same access. The next State Government must take these initiatives further to stem the tide of this devastating disease.

## What is stroke?

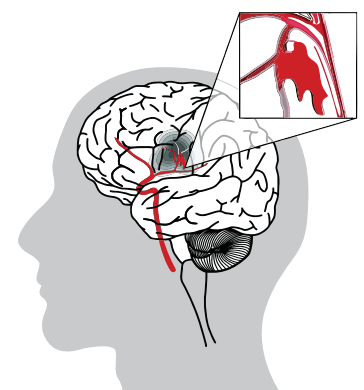
Stroke attacks the brain – our most vital organ. A stroke occurs when **blood supply to the brain is cut off** because of a clot blocking an artery (ischaemic stroke) or due to a burst artery (haemorrhagic stroke). When blood supply to the brain is blocked brain cells begin to die at a rate of up to 1.9 million each minute.

Every stroke is different depending on where in the brain it strikes and how severe it is. What is common is the devastation it can cause to the survivor, their carer and family. It is the leading cause of adult disability for Australians.

**The Stroke Foundation calls on the next South Australian Government to invest an additional \$3.03 million over four years to deliver a stronger health system for all South Australians impacted by stroke.**



**Clot**  
(Ischaemic stroke)



**Bleed**  
(Haemorrhagic or  
Intracerebral stroke)

# 1.

## F.A.S.T. education to reduce stroke and speed up treatment

**Objective:** Ensure every South Australian household has someone who knows the signs of stroke.

**Investment required:** \$240,000 over four years.

When someone suffers a stroke every minute counts. F.A.S.T. access to treatment means a greater chance of recovery and **decreased costs for our health system**. When a stroke does occur, the best outcomes are achieved when treatment is received quickly. Too often treatment is delayed due to a lack of awareness about the signs and symptoms of stroke.

Stroke Foundation's F.A.S.T. (Face, Arms, Speech and Time) community education campaign will raise vital awareness of stroke risk factors and the signs of stroke in urban centres and regional communities across South Australia. We have a pool of **South Australian volunteers**, and existing stroke resources and materials which means the program is ready for roll out immediately.



Recognise  
**STROKE**  
Think **F.A.S.T.**

Stroke FOUNDATION

**F**  
Has their **FACE** drooped?

**A**  
Can they lift both **ARMS**?

**S**  
Is their **SPEECH** slurred and do they understand you?

**T**  
Call 000, **TIME** is critical

If you see any of these symptoms  
**Act FAST call 000**

This globally adopted message has proven results locally and internationally with a **return on marketing investment as high as 28:1**.

## F.A.S.T. messages for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have stroke rates three times greater than other Australians.

A multifaceted approach would include:

- › F.A.S.T. program specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
- › Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ambassadors to spread StrokeSafe messages to local communities.
- › Culturally appropriate resources for use by South Australian health services.

**Additional investment = \$50,000 over four years**



# 2.

## Fair access to the best in stroke treatment for all South Australians

**Objective:** Utilise technology to ensure all South Australians have access to the best stroke treatment and care, regardless of where they live.

**Investment:** South Australian Telestroke Network – \$910,000 over four years (equipment and implementation support).

Permanent stroke coordinators for regional hospitals with stroke units.

All South Australians deserve high quality healthcare close to home. Where you live should not impact your access to the best in stroke treatment and specialised care.

Stroke is a serious medical emergency requiring urgent medical attention, but with the right treatment at the right time, many people are able to recover from stroke. Recent advancements in 'time is brain' therapies **save lives and reduce disability** in stroke survivors.

Currently, not all South Australians have access to time-critical treatments and it is costing lives. **Only 20 percent** of eligible stroke patients **receive life-saving but time-critical clot-busting treatments**. Clot removal (endovascular thrombectomy) is currently only available in Adelaide.

The South Australian Government has implemented protocols significantly improving access to reperfusion therapies. We must now build on these protocols, strengthening the health system for all South Australians.

### There is a solution:

- › **South Australian Telestroke Network** – telemedicine enables fast assessment of suspected stroke patients in regional areas by metropolitan based stroke specialists. Regionally based clinicians are supported in administering clot-busting thrombolysis treatment and/or arranging transfer to a comprehensive stroke centre for clot removal.

"When blood thinners didn't work on Darlene, the doctor told me about the then relatively new clot retrieval procedure, hesitant I asked if this was your wife what would you do and he said 'I'd sign the paper, without hesitation,' and it saved her life."

Don, husband of Darlene, stroke survivor



## Latest 'time is brain' therapies

- › **Thrombolysis** (clot busting treatment) administered in the first 4.5 hours of stroke symptoms to break down a clot in the brain.
- › **Endovascular thrombectomy** (clot removal treatment) takes out large clots using a tiny mechanical device guided through the arteries to the brain. It must be delivered within six hours of stroke symptoms and is highly effective.

# 3.

## Standing by stroke survivors and their families – SA Stroke Patient Follow-up Service

**Objective:** Ensure stroke survivors and their families are supported to live well after stroke.

**Investment:** \$1.4 million over four years.

Education, advice and care planning are essential to ensuring stroke survivors are equipped to participate in their treatment, stay well and manage their long-term recovery. Audit results show many patients **do not receive a care plan** to help them and their family access support, services and information to make the transition home and continue on their recovery journey.

The Stroke Foundation Stroke **Patient Follow-up Service** is a telephone service reaching out to stroke survivors and their families once they return home. It supports families to manage stroke recovery by helping address gaps in information, providing referral to appropriate community rehabilitation and other support services, **reducing the chance of subsequent stroke**. It also supports stroke clinicians to improve the quality of discharge care.

# 4.

## Better quality stroke treatment and care for all South Australians

**Objective:** Lead the way by closing gaps between clinical guidelines and practice, ensuring the ongoing quality and safety of stroke services in South Australia.

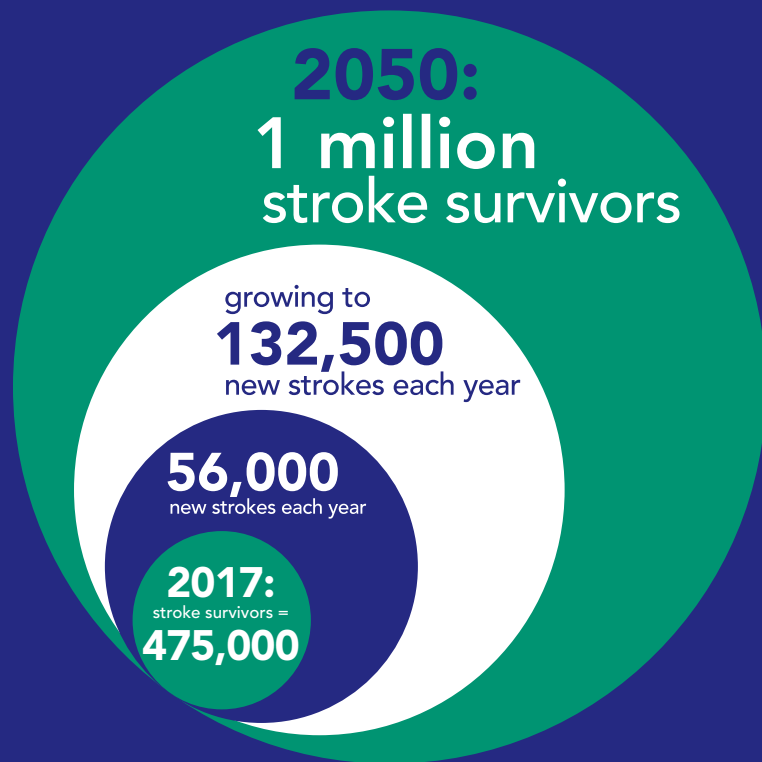
**Investment:** \$480,000 over four years.

South Australians are dying or being left disabled unnecessarily from stroke because the care they receive is not in line with best-practice guidelines.

State Government investment has developed a strong infrastructure base for stroke care in South Australia. Now this infrastructure must be maximised to make stroke treatment and care better for all South Australians. A stronger stroke treatment and care system for all South Australians will be delivered through:

- › **South Australian 'Community of Practice' for Stroke** – a unifying clinical voice with multidisciplinary state-wide representation. The 'Community of Practice' will provide the leadership needed to improve access to best-practice stroke care across the state, facilitate clinical engagement, and support system-wide and localised quality improvement.
- › **Implementation and participation in the Australian Stroke Clinical Registry (AuSCR)** – monitoring what our state's services are doing well and what can be improved, comparing results to services across Australia.
- › **Empowering hospitals** to improve the support they provide stroke patients by investing in Stroke Care Coach, a Stroke Foundation specialist program focused on quality improvement using stroke data, best-practice guidelines and linking hospital staff and their patients with resources, training and information.

# Stroke in Australia



## Five stroke facts







- › Stroke kills more women than breast cancer and more men than prostate cancer.
- › One in six people will have a stroke in their lifetime.
- › In 2017 an estimated 56,000 strokes occurred – one every nine minutes.
- › One in three stroke survivors are of working age.
- › Sixty-five percent of those living with stroke also suffer a disability that impedes their ability to carry out daily living activities unassisted.

## About the Stroke Foundation

The Stroke Foundation is a national charity that partners with the community to prevent, treat and beat stroke. We stand alongside stroke survivors and their families, healthcare professionals and researchers. We build community awareness and foster new thinking. We support survivors on their journey to live the best possible life after stroke.



### How to get more involved

-  **Give time** – become a volunteer.
-  **Raise funds** – donate or hold a fundraising event.
-  **Speak up** – join our advocacy team.
-  **Leave a lasting legacy** – include a gift in your Will.
-  **Know your numbers** – check your health regularly.
-  **Stay informed** – keep up-to-date and share our message.

### Contact us

-  08 6457 3574
-  [strokefoundation.org.au](http://strokefoundation.org.au)
-  [/strokefoundation](https://www.facebook.com/strokefoundation)
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