



What does the Budget 2019 – 2020 mean for people living with MND?

MND Australia response to the federal Budget handed down by the Treasurer on 2 April 2019

Aged Care

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg delivered few surprises for aged care in the budget last week. The \$282.4 million for 10,000 more home care packages and increased home care supplements for dementia and cognition had been previously announced in February.

Although this increased investment is welcomed it is unlikely that it will improve access to home care packages for people living with MND. With over 120,000 older Australians currently on the national queue we remain concerned that people diagnosed with MND aged 65 and older will continue to be forced to wait many months for services and support to meet their increasing and complex disability needs.

The additional \$84.3 million for the [Integrated Carer Support Service](#) to support young carers with transport, cooking and cleaning costs, as well as education and training is a very welcome investment for younger carers of people living with MND. Also welcomed is the additional \$2.6 million to implement the Aged Care Workforce Strategy. It is essential that aged care services have the right skill mix to be able to meet the complex care needs of people living with MND and to support staff to provide care to individuals and their families.

We will continue our campaign to [Make Aged Care Fair](#) and call on the government to ensure that people diagnosed with MND when aged 65 and over are prioritised for assessment and fast track access to high level packages. Waiting lists are not an option for people with a diagnosis of MND and an average life expectancy of just 2 to 3 years.

In addition we call on the government to introduce a home care supplement to improve timely access to vital assistive technology to address the complex disability needs of people diagnosed with conditions such as MND when aged 65 and older.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The continuing underspend in the NDIS is of great concern to MND Australia and disability advocacy organisations nationwide. People living with MND continue to be impacted by problems related to the implementation of the NDIS with often long waiting times for plan development and approvals. It is generally agreed that funds allocated to people are not being spent due to confusion and inefficiencies within the system.

Many people living with MND under the age of 65 are now accessing services and support that meet their needs and this is having a positive impact on quality of life, safety and community engagement. It is vital that unspent funds are invested back into the system to get it working the way it should be. MND Australia therefore welcomes the opposition's pledge to 'Get the NDIS back on track' should they be elected to government.

A fully-funded NDIS gives reassurance and certainty to people diagnosed with MND when under the age of 65 years. We will therefore continue to work with the NDIA and the Government to improve the planning process, plan implementation and access to specialised assistive technology for people living with MND. We are hopeful that a fully-



funded and efficient NDIS will ensure the Scheme focuses on the need for specialised planning that takes into account the complex and progressing needs of people living with MND. See our recent submission to the [Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS](#).

Health

The health Budget announcements most relevant to people living with MND and their families relates to the much needed investment to primary health care through the GP package.

The GP package includes:

- \$448.5 million to improve continuity of care for patients over 70 with chronic conditions;
- Quality Incentive Payments for general practices (\$201.5 million);
- \$62.2 million for rural generalist training; and
- \$187.2 million for lifting of the freeze on GP items.

MND Australia will continue to engage with the Health Minister and the opposition to advocate for improved access to health care services as outlined in our [National Action Framework](#) including the development of national guidelines, access to fully funded genetic services for families with identified genetic mutations and a commitment to fund specialist MND multidisciplinary clinics.

Research

MND Australia congratulates the Federal Government on its continued commitment to health and medical research and recognises the strong bipartisan support for research. The recent Budget confirmed that the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) remains on track to receive a massive \$7.8 billion capital injection in 2019/20 and to reach its capital target of \$20 billion by 2020/21.

Since January there have been more than \$800 million in MRFF funding announcements committed to new programs spanning up to a decade with some of this funding being allocated to research related to MND. In addition a 10 year plan for nearly \$5 billion in MRFF funding was announced this week.

In contrast the budget only allows for small increases at less than the rate of inflation in NHMRC and Australian Research Council (ARC) funding programs over the four year budget estimates. Funding for the Research Support Program has been cut significantly, hampering the ability of universities to conduct research. NHMRC and ARC grants have been vital in supporting MND researchers to grow their research and increase our understanding of MND as well as funding research collaborations to improve care. We call on all parties to ensure adequate support and funding for these vital research funding programs in the future.

For more information read [Research Australia's Budget Analysis](#)

Carol Birks – CEO, MND Australia



About MND Australia

MND Australia is the national voice representing all who share the vision of a world without MND. Together with the [State MND Associations](#) we advance, promote and influence MND care and research with a vision to achieving a world without MND. MND Australia improves the lives of all Australians impacted by motor neurone disease by influencing policy, providing trusted information, raising awareness and promoting research funding.

Until there is a cure, MND Australia's research arm, the MND Research Institute of Australia, will promote and fund the best research with the greatest chance of making MND treatable.

[MND Australia pre- budget submission](#)

[National Action Framework](#)

[\\$25 million, 25 Milestones: Changing the future of MND](#)

[Deloitte report – Economic analysis of MND in Australia](#)