

4.5 million Australians living with neurological conditions: A problem too big for governments to ignore

New national data showing at least one in six Australians lives with a neurological condition must trigger urgent government action, Neurological Alliance Australia says.

22 SEPTEMBER 2026: The number of Australians reported to be living with a neurological condition has more than doubled under revised national estimates, strengthening the case for governments to make neurological health a national priority.

Updated data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), released yesterday, shows 4.5 million Australians—at least one in six people—are living with a neurological condition.

The revised estimate replaces the 2.2 million figure reported in the AIHW's December 2025 neurological conditions report.

Neurological Alliance Australia (NAA) said the scale of the revised figure confirms neurological conditions are one of Australia's major health and disability challenges, yet they remain under-recognised and underfunded in national policy.

NAA renewed its call for the Australian Government to lead the development of a National Action Plan for Neurological Conditions, together with state and territory governments and the neurological community.

It also launched [Fair Go for Neuro: Action Plan Now](#), a public advocacy campaign inviting Australians to sign an open letter calling for action.

NAA Chair and MS Australia CEO Rohan Greenland said the new figure should be a watershed moment for neurological health policy.

"There are 4.5 million Australians living with a neurological condition - that's one-in-six Australians.

"It is a national challenge affecting families, workplaces, communities and every part of our health, disability and aged care systems," Mr Greenland said.

Mr Greenland said it's time Australian governments lift their game and address the common systemic issues facing all neurological conditions.

"Australia has national strategies for other major health challenges and people living with neurological conditions deserve the same coordinated national focus.

“The Australian Government must now lead the development of a National Action Plan, working with states and territories and the neurological community to turn practical solutions into measurable improvements in people’s lives,” Mr Greenland said.

The call follows Australia’s first national survey of people affected by neurological conditions.

The 2026 NAA Neuro Survey of 3,805 Australians found fewer than four in ten respondents described their care as coordinated.

The survey also found 51% had difficulty accessing neurological care, 30% waited more than four years for a diagnosis, and 48% delayed or skipped healthcare because of cost.

NAA Deputy Chair and Emerge Australia CEO Anne Wilson said the revised figure added weight and urgency to reforms already mapped out by the neurological community.

“Behind this number are millions of people waiting too long for a diagnosis, struggling to find the right specialist, putting off care because of cost, or trying to navigate disconnected services on their own,” Ms Wilson said.

NAA’s Blueprint already sets out practical, evidence-informed solutions developed by more than 50 neurological and neuromuscular organisations.

Ms Wilson said what is now needed is government leadership to bring those solutions together in a funded, accountable national plan.

“Better neurological care can help people stay healthier and independent for longer, and where possible remain in work and keep doing the things that matter to them. Australians living with neurological conditions have waited long enough,” Ms Wilson said.

What a National Action Plan would deliver:

- earlier diagnosis and access to the right care
- better-connected care and support
- a stronger neurological workforce
- more research and new treatments
- better access to care, wherever people live.

Economic modelling commissioned by NAA found that prevention, better treatment and rehabilitation across 11 common neurological conditions could save Australia at least \$7 billion each year through improved productivity, fewer preventable hospitalisations and more coordinated care.

Through [Fair Go for Neuro: Action Plan Now](#), NAA is calling on Australians to sign an open letter urging governments to develop a National Action Plan for Neurological Conditions.

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About NAA

The Neurological Alliance Australia is a collective of not-for-profit peak or national patient organisations representing adults and children living with neurological or neuromuscular conditions or neurological disorders in Australia.

The Alliance works collaboratively to identify and advocate for opportunities that will promote improved quality of life for people living with these conditions and funding to support research.