

Step up for stroke

WA Election Platform 2020



Western Australian survivor of stroke
Rodney Oates with his wife Kelly, and family.

strokefoundation.org.au
December 2020



The challenge for Western Australia (WA)

State of stroke¹

- › 2,706 Western Australians experienced a stroke for the first time in 2020
- › 43,634 survivors of stroke living in the community
- › 816 Western Australians lost their lives to stroke in 2020

Stroke risk in Western Australia¹

- › High blood pressure: 494,200
- › High cholesterol: 182,800
- › No physical activity: 284,000

Stroke services in WA

We're just getting started delivering high quality healthcare to all Western Australians...

- ✓ Announced expansion of the WA Telestroke Service statewide and 24/7 (September 2020). The service will build on the current WA Telestroke Service which is delivering emergency stroke treatment during business hours in limited locations.
- ✓ New stroke unit established at Joondalup Hospital.
- ✓ 283 patients with stroke received clot retrieval treatment (endovascular thrombectomy).²
- ✓ 5,692 Western Australians received vital signs of stroke and stroke prevention messages at F.A.S.T. community education sessions (since 2018).

Other outcomes have room for improvement...

- ✗ 42 percent of patients received stroke unit care, compared with 67 percent nationally.²
- ✗ 9 percent of patients who arrived within 4.5 hours of symptom onset received thrombolysis in ischaemic stroke, compared with 26 nationally.²
- ✗ Implementing the 24/7 Telestroke Service per the WA Government's approved business case.

At a glance

Stroke Foundation is calling for the next WA Government to take the next steps in helping Western Australians avoid, survive and live well after stroke. These steps will deliver on the WA Government's *Sustainable Health Review Final Report, 2019*.³

Proposal 1.

Continue and expand the successful F.A.S.T. (Face, Arms, Speech, and Time) Community Education Program supporting the WA Telestroke Service.

Expanding the established F.A.S.T. Community Education Program and tailoring to our state's regional and rural communities. The program would support the rollout of the WA Telestroke Service providing vital health messages about stroke.

Investment: \$100,000 per annum for four years.

Result: More at-risk Western Australians avoiding stroke and accessing emergency stroke treatment. This includes Aboriginal people and those living in regional areas of our state.

Proposal 2.

StrokeLink – Using data and expertise to drive better healthcare for all Western Australians.

Delivering world-class stroke treatment and care to all. StrokeLink will support our health professionals to close gaps between best-practice guidelines and practice.

Investment: \$200,000 per annum for four years.

Result: Supporting WA hospital staff to access best-practice quality improvement, and deliver better access to high quality stroke treatment and care, giving Western Australians the opportunity to survive and live well after stroke.

Proposal 3.

Stroke unit at Bunbury Regional Hospital.

Delivering Western Australians living in the South West the best in stroke treatment and care close to home.



Busselton Jetty, Western Australia

Introduction

Government investment in hospitals, the WA Telestroke Service, and targeted F.A.S.T. signs of stroke community education in Perth, have been important. Now it is time to take the next steps forward, to ensure all Western Australians have equity of access to the safe, high-quality treatment and care we know improves outcomes.

More than 2000 Western Australians will experience a stroke for the first time in 2020.¹ Some of these Western Australians will live in our cities, but most are likely to live in our regions. Regional Australians are 17 percent more likely to experience a stroke than their city counterparts.¹

All Western Australians deserve an equitable opportunity to survive and live well after stroke.

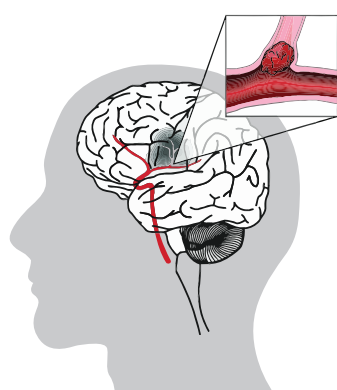
It is an investment in a healthier WA, and a more efficient and sustainable health system.

Stroke Foundation applauds the Western Australian Government for the rapid response to addressing the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Decisive action to prevent the virus spreading has resulted in our community being protected and has enabled a focus on recovery. Survivors of stroke are among the most vulnerable to this virus, and WA's position demonstrates the value in prevention and improved access to treatments of chronic disease, to ensure a more sustainable health system.

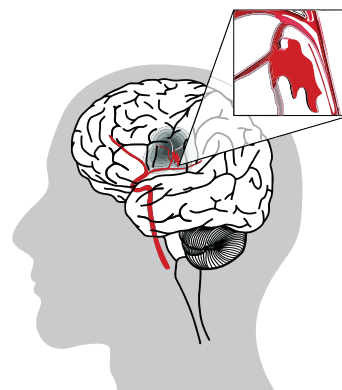
What is stroke?

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.⁴

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.



Clot
(Ischaemic stroke)



Bleed
(Intracerebral haemorrhage)

Stroke attacks the brain, the human control centre, changing the lives of the individual and their loved ones forever.

Proposal 1.

Continue and expand the successful F.A.S.T. (Face, Arms, Speech and Time) Community Education Program supporting the WA Telestroke Service.

Investment: \$100,000 per annum for four years, to deliver increased stroke prevention education to at-risk Western Australians.

Sustainable Health Review linkages

Enduring Strategy 1: Commit and collaborate to address major public health issues;
Recommendations: 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Enduring Strategy 4: Person-centred, equitable, seamless access;
Recommendations: 11, 12 and 15.

The graphic features a dark blue header with the text 'Recognise STROKE Think F.A.S.T.' and the Stroke Foundation logo. Below the header are four panels illustrating the F.A.S.T. acronym: 'F' (Face) with a photo of a woman's face and the text 'Has their FACE drooped?'; 'A' (Arms) with a photo of hands and the text 'Can they lift both ARMS?'; 'S' (Speech) with a photo of a person's mouth and the text 'Is their SPEECH slurred and do they understand you?'; and 'T' (Time) with a photo of a hand holding a phone and the text 'Call 000, TIME is critical'. To the right, a dark blue box contains the text 'If you see any of these symptoms Act FAST call 000'.

- › 19 percent of Western Australians can recognise two or more signs of stroke unprompted.⁵
- › 32 percent of Western Australians arrive at hospital within 4.5 hours of stroke symptom onset.²

Recognising the signs of stroke and calling triple zero (000) is the first step in ensuring access to life changing stroke treatment for all Western Australians.

Continuing and expanding Stroke Foundation's F.A.S.T. Community Education Program to support the roll out of the WA Telestroke Service will ensure the benefits of the Government's Recovery Plan investment are maximised.

Stroke Foundation will partner with the Government and the community to innovate and tailor this successful program to the needs of our state's regional and rural communities, providing vital messages about health. In addition to raising awareness of stroke as a medical emergency, it will deliver messages about stroke risk factors, and help Western Australians avoid stroke.

F.A.S.T. Community Education within Perth is delivering results. However, there is more work to be done. Community health messaging has been vital to keeping our state safe from COVID-19. We now have an opportunity to take the lessons from this experience and apply them to stroke and other chronic diseases as we continue our recovery.

Achievements to date

This is the third year of this program, and it has continued to build momentum, evidenced by growth in the number of education sessions delivered, and an increase in participation at community events.

In the three years since the program has been rolled out, it has delivered:

- › **25 StrokeSafe Speakers**, 21 in the greater Perth area and four in the South-West.
- › **176 community education sessions**, reaching 5,692 people.
- › **27 community events** at which stroke prevention displays and activities were delivered, where we engaged with over 3,200 people.
- › The first StrokeSafe community education session delivered online utilising communications technology. This approach has now been made available nationally.
- › **64 percent of community education sessions and events which have reached populations at higher risk of stroke.**
- › Significant local media coverage.
- › Partnerships developed with Rotary Clubs, universities, Bunnings stores, St John Ambulance, and community centres.

Between March and July 2020, planned activities were disrupted as a result of COVID-19 restrictions; however, our StrokeSafe Speakers returned to delivering community talks in mid-August, and we continue to be flexible in our approach to service delivery in relation to COVID-19 restrictions.



Survivor of stroke and Stroke Foundation WA StrokeSafe Speaker Joanna Rose (right), and Stroke Foundation Health Promotion intern Chris Haydock (left), at a community event held by the Wesbuilders Cooperative in Perth.

John's story

John Harrison-Brown, 84, from Harvey in Western Australia's South West, understands the devastating effect stroke can have on an individual's life.

The former nurse and paramedic is passionate about raising awareness of stroke, something he has seen many times in his 50 year career.

In his role as a Stroke Foundation StrokeSafe Speaker, John delivers presentations with potentially lifesaving messages about stroke to community groups and workplaces in the state's South West.

"Too many Western Australians continue to be devastated by stroke, but we know that 80 percent of strokes can be prevented, and stroke can be treated," John said.

"I am focused on educating people about how they can prevent stroke by making healthy lifestyle choices and how to recognise the signs of stroke."

"When it comes to stroke, time is critical. The quicker we can get someone to hospital for treatment, the better their chances of survival and having a good outcome."



Proposal 2.

StrokeLink – Using data and expertise to drive better healthcare for all Western Australians.

Investment: \$200,000 per annum for four years, to deliver best-practice continuous quality-improvement initiatives in partnership with WA hospital staff, and better outcomes for stroke patients.

Sustainable Health Review linkages

Enduring Strategy 5: Drive safety, quality and value through transparency, funding and planning; Recommendations: 16, 17, and 20.

Enduring Strategy 6: Invest in digital healthcare and use data wisely; Recommendation: 22.

Enduring Strategy 7: Culture and workforce to support new models of care; Recommendation: 24.

StrokeLink will take health service admission and performance data, and best-practice treatment guidelines, and partner with hospitals and health professionals to translate these data into safer, more effective stroke treatment and care.

As a well-respected, independent voice in stroke, and a developer of the Clinical Guidelines for Stroke Management, Stroke Foundation will partner with our state's health services to establish what is working well, and where improvements need to be made at a system and hospital level. Together, experiences will be shared, and plans made, to ensure high quality healthcare in the city, and in our regions.

StrokeLink is a key step forward in ensuring an equitable, sustainable and efficient health system.

The program will utilise Stroke Foundation's successful evidence-based tools that contribute to improved patient care across Australia, including:

- › Clinical Guidelines for Stroke Management (Living Guidelines).
- › The National Stroke Audit Program.
- › InformMe – a dedicated website for health professionals working in stroke care.
- › Health professional webinars and workshops.
- › Peer to peer sharing.

Benefits and proven success of StrokeLink

StrokeLink has been supporting hospitals across Queensland for a number of years, and has been shown to contribute to substantial and clinically relevant improvements in best-practice stroke care in Queensland hospitals, including^{6,7}:

- › Greater access to, and time in, stroke unit care, thereby reducing overall hospital length of stay.
- › More patients accessing emergency stroke treatments.
- › More patients leaving hospital with a plan and supports to continue their recovery, avoiding a further stroke and further reductions in their functioning and quality of life, as well as further health service demand and costs.

Beth's story

Perth resident Beth Browning (pictured (middle) below) was just 19 when she suffered a stroke in 2019.

"I was lying in my bed and started to feel dizzy. I tried to type something on my phone, but couldn't. I went downstairs to tell my parents, but when I tried to speak, I couldn't get the words out," said Beth.

Fortunately, Beth is a nursing student, and her mother is a nurse, and they were both quick to recognise the signs of stroke. Beth was rushed to the hospital, where she underwent CT and MRI scans that confirmed she was having a stroke.

Fortunately for Beth, 12 hours after her stroke, her speech began to recover, and she started to feel better.

Beth has no permanent cognitive deficits or motor skill impairment as a result of her stroke, and after undergoing a lot of rehab, is on the road to recovery; however, she still battles fatigue and headaches.

"I do consider myself extremely lucky. I think it's really important to raise community awareness about the signs of stroke, and the fact that stroke can affect anyone, young or old."



Proposal 3.

A new stroke unit at Bunbury Regional Hospital.

A new stroke unit in the redeveloped Bunbury Regional Hospital will deliver Western Australians living in the South West the best opportunity to survive and live well after stroke.

Sustainable Health Review linkages

Enduring Strategy 1: Commit and collaborate to address major public health issues;
Recommendation: 3.

Enduring Strategy 4: Person-centred, equitable, seamless access;
Recommendation: 12.

- › More than 100 stroke patients are admitted to Bunbury Regional Hospital annually.
- › 42 percent of Western Australian patients are treated on a stroke unit, compared with a national average of 67 percent.²
- › Building on time-critical stroke treatment, access to a dedicated stroke unit is proven to make the biggest difference to patient outcomes following stroke, both in hospital and after.⁸

The Bunbury Regional Hospital requires a reorganisation of services to deliver:

- › Dedicated, co-located stroke beds.
- › An interdisciplinary team including a medical lead, stroke unit coordinator, nurses and allied health professionals who work together to improve patient outcomes following stroke.

The next step to ensuring equitable access to safer, high-quality stroke treatment and care for Western Australians in the South West is a stroke unit. It will strengthen the WA Telestroke Service by ensuring emergency stroke treatments are followed up by best-practice ongoing treatment and care close to home.

A local stroke unit will reduce unnecessary transfers, ensuring our health system is more efficient and sustainable.

The benefits of stroke unit care are well recognised in our state, with stroke units at Fiona Stanley Hospital, Joondalup Hospital, Rockingham Hospital, Royal Perth Hospital, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, and St John of God Midland Public Hospital. It is time for one to be established in our state's South West.

Rodney's story

Busselton resident, Rodney Oates, was 50 when he suffered a stroke in 2016. At the time of Rodney's stroke he was working on his dairy farm, 20 kilometres outside Busselton. Rodney had a bad headache, and while opening a gate, he collapsed. Rodney managed to get onto his tractor and drove to the close-by home of a worker on the farm. Rodney crawled into the house, saw that no one was there, and phoned his wife Kelly.

Kelly, on the way home from town, answered the phone call, but could not understand what Rodney was saying. Kelly put Rodney's muffled speech down to poor phone reception. Arriving at the farm, Kelly found Rodney on the floor, with a facial droop and slurred speech. He couldn't move the right side of his body. Kelly called triple zero (000) immediately, and they were transported to hospital in Bunbury.

From Bunbury, Rodney was eventually transported to Perth. It was two days after the stroke before a specialist explained that Rodney had suffered a stroke.

Rodney spent the next six weeks in a Perth hospital, before another 12 weeks in rehabilitation. Rodney underwent intensive rehabilitation, focused on getting him walking and speaking again. The couple made the difficult decision to sell their farm, and move to Busselton, to focus on Rodney's rehab. Kelly became Rodney's full time carer.

"Being so far away from home for so long, had a major impact on our mental health and wellbeing. Trying to manage the farm remotely, and being away from our two sons, was really challenging," Kelly said.

Four years after his stroke, Rodney is able to use his right leg, although he walks with a slight limp; however, he has not regained use of his right arm. Rodney has not been able to return to work.

"If there had been a stroke unit at the Bunbury Regional Hospital when I had my stroke, I would have gotten the treatment and care I needed so much faster, and I may have had a very different outcome. People living in the South West shouldn't be missing out on treatment for stroke just because of where they live," Rodney said.



Western Australian survivor of stroke
Rodney Oates with his wife Kelly.







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 survivors of stroke 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

-  **03 9670 1000**
-  **strokefoundation.org.au**
-  **[/strokefoundation](https://www.facebook.com/strokefoundation)**
-  **[@strokefdn](https://twitter.com/strokefdn)**
-  **[@strokefdn](https://www.instagram.com/strokefdn)**

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