



# QUICK FACTS ABOUT MS

## **The General Facts**

- An estimated **2,500,000 people around the world** have multiple sclerosis (MS).
- An estimated **18,000 people in Australia** have MS.
- MS affects **three times as many women** as men.
- The **average age of diagnosis is 30**. 87% are of working age.
- MS is a **chronic**, often **disabling disease** that randomly attacks the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord). The progress, severity and specific symptoms of the disease cannot be predicted.
- MS is a **lifelong disease** for which a cure is yet to be found. However, doctors and scientists are **making discoveries in treating and understanding MS** everyday.

## **Symptoms & Impacts**

- **Symptoms** may include: extreme tiredness (fatigue), impaired vision, loss of balance and muscle coordination, slurred speech, tremors, stiffness, bladder and bowel problems, difficulty walking, short-term memory loss, and in severe cases, partial or complete paralysis.
- Relationship and **employment problems**.
- **High costs** of chronic illness – can be as high as 20% of income spent on health.

## **Burden of the disease**

- MS costs Australia **\$2 billion each year**.
- **Loss of productivity** costs \$150 million per year
- The replacement cost of **informal care** provided to Australians with MS is \$250 million.
- Australians with MS **pay \$160 million** per year out of their own pockets in health costs.

## **Employment**

- **80%** of people with MS **lose their job** within 10 years of diagnosis.
- **30% higher representation** in part time employment.
- Higher occupational skill level than the Australian population.
- 48% of people with MS earn **less than \$300 per week** compared with 39% of the Australian population.

## **How you can help**

- **Call 1800 CURE MS** to make a donation or for more information.
- **Volunteer** your time to MS Australia – ACT/NSW/VIC
- Participating in **fundraising activities**– MS Readathon, MS Sydney to the Gong Bike Ride, Melbourne Summer Cycle and MS Walk & Fun Run during MS Awareness Week (June).

**For more information about MS and MS Australia – ACT/NSW/VIC please visit:**  
**[www.msaustralia.org.au](http://www.msaustralia.org.au)**