



Stroke survivors ask MPs to walk in their shoes

Stroke survivors and carers go to Parliament House today [15 August] to ask MPs to walk in their shoes and face some of the difficulties they face.

The stroke survivors will attend the launch by Health Minister Tony Abbott of the National Stroke Foundation's report on stroke support in Australia, *Walk In Our Shoes*.

The report paints a bleak picture for stroke survivors who continue to struggle to regain their health after a stroke and have difficulties finding information to help them recover.

Many suffer from social isolation and depression and nearly all fear they will have another stroke.

Based on surveys and in-depth interviews with stroke survivors and carers around Australia, the report found that more than a third of stroke survivors surveyed needed help with everyday activities, and 95% reported they had yet to make a full recovery.

For many carers their over-riding concern was that their spouse or partner would die leaving them distraught and vulnerable.

Dr Erin Lalor, CEO of the National Stroke Foundation says the survivors and their carers are calling on governments around Australia to develop and implement strategies that will improve life after stroke for stroke survivors in Australia as well as their carers, families and friends.

"There are nearly 350,000 stroke survivors in Australia, that's more than the population of the ACT," Dr Lalor said.

The report highlights that take up of services considered valuable by stroke survivors and carers is limited and for many services identified as valuable were inaccessible or not available.

Dr Lalor says that better coordination of family, community and health care support would ensure that more people receive the services they need.

"Over the next 10 years, nearly half a million Australians will suffer at least one stroke, so there will be many more stroke survivors living at home and looking for information and services to help with their recovery," she said.

"Our research indicates that significant funds need to be devoted to improving the life of stroke survivors and carers."

Dr Lalor said an initial costing indicates that a minimum of \$12 million over four years would be required to begin the process of strategically linking services for stroke survivors and carers with existing health and community services and improving access to services identified by consumers as critical for recovery.

For more information, copies of the report, or to interview Dr Lalor or a stroke survivor contact Nicola Edwards on 0416 800 790, 03 9670 1000 or Brian Peck on 0437 515 505.