



PROUDLY SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH
ALL NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS

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MSWA funds stroke protection research

In 2009, Lyndee Aspey was struck down by a stroke that left her confined to a wheelchair and with slurred speech. Once living in a nursing home, surrounded by people much older than her, Lyndee is now one of 10 full-time residents at Fern River, a high-support accommodation facility managed by MSWA.

Her new home has given Lyndee the opportunity to take full advantage of the many services on offer, including regular outings, art classes and the outreach groups, where people enjoy time with friends while accessing physiotherapy, massages and advice from health professionals.

“Working with the physiotherapist I’ve got some movement back in my left side, which has helped with my talking, which is good because I’m a bit of a social butterfly,” said Lyndee.

“MSWA has given me life again, which I kind of lost when I got the stroke. The difference has been amazing.”

Lyndee’s 12-year-old granddaughter Lyric visits her regularly and even stayed over during the recent school holidays.

“I still can’t walk but I can take Lyric out on my own and, at 12, she’s quite mature and she’ll look after her Nanna,” added Lyndee.

Sadly, Lyndee’s story isn’t unique. Stroke is one of the leading causes of death and disability locally, nationally and internationally. Australians will suffer around 60,000 new and recurrent strokes a year, that’s one every 10 minutes. And its burden on society is increasing as the population ages, a process exacerbated by the ongoing diabetes and obesity epidemics. The economic impact of stroke to the Australian economy is estimated to be \$5 billion a year, including \$3 billion in lost productivity.

In an effort to help reduce the damage caused by a stroke, MSWA is investing \$250,000 to fund local research into determining the effectiveness of peptide treatment in reducing damage to the brain after a stroke.

Adjunct Associate Professor Bruno Meloni, the head of Stroke Laboratory Research at the Perron Institute, is heading up the research along with Clinical Professor Neville Knuckey, the head of Stroke Research, and their team, which will assess the effectiveness of peptide R18D in a stroke model.

“When a person has a stroke the brain cells are under stress because of a reduction of blood, oxygen and glucose. What we know is that this particular peptide has neuroprotective properties and can cross cell membranes and enter the brain. Once there, the peptide can inhibit the flood of toxic calcium into brain cells, reduce the activity of enzymes that break



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down brain tissue and also help keep brain cells alive,” said Adjunct Associate Professor Meloni.

“Without any treatment, three to four hours after a stroke the majority of brain damage is complete. But if our research finds that the peptide can protect the brain, there could come a time when ambulance paramedics inject the peptide into someone who has had a stroke, which could help prevent any long-term injury to the brain.

“Peptides could also be used to extend the time window to treat someone who is having a stroke to have it diagnosed and treated with a drug to dissolve a blood clot in the brain or have the clot removed using a catheter, so we should see improved outcomes there as well.”

“If the stroke research we’re funding makes the breakthrough we’re hoping for in reducing brain damage, it will be great news not just for Western Australians but people all around the world. The peptide trials are expected to take six to seven months to complete and if everything goes well, an approved treatment could be ready for use within four to five years,” said MSWA CEO, Marcus Stafford AM.

“MSWA’s funding of stroke research is part of our broader remit of now offering specialist support and services for people with more than 30 neurological conditions including Parkinson’s disease, Huntington’s disease, acquired brain injuries and motor neurone disease.”

“Over the past five years we’ve invested more than \$8.55 million in research into finding the cause and cure for multiple sclerosis and other neurological conditions. This year alone we’re spending a record \$2.6 million, more than twice the amount contributed by all the other States added together.”

As a registered NDIS provider, MSWA offers a one-stop approach for its Members. Their dedicated team can answer questions about the NDIS, assess someone’s NDIS eligibility, help them through the application process and develop a comprehensive plan for them.

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