



RESEARCH
ADVOCACY
CURE

MS AUSTRALIA CARER STRATEGY

1. SCOPE

MS Australia set a strategic priority to embed people with MS, their carers, family and friends within the organisation.

Pillar 3 of MS Australia's Strategic Plan 2022-2026, *People living with MS, their carers, friends and family*, sets a strategic priority to ensure the MS community has a strong voice in our governance, research, policy and advocacy, education and awareness.

MS Australia is developing a strategy that specifically focuses on the needs, wellbeing and voice of people affected by MS through our Consumer Engagement Roadmap, family, friends and those caring for a people with MS (carers).

Carers are an integral part of the care economy and act as the foundation for our aged, disability, palliative and community care systems. Their contribution often remains unrecognised. Similarly, their diverse needs are often overlooked.

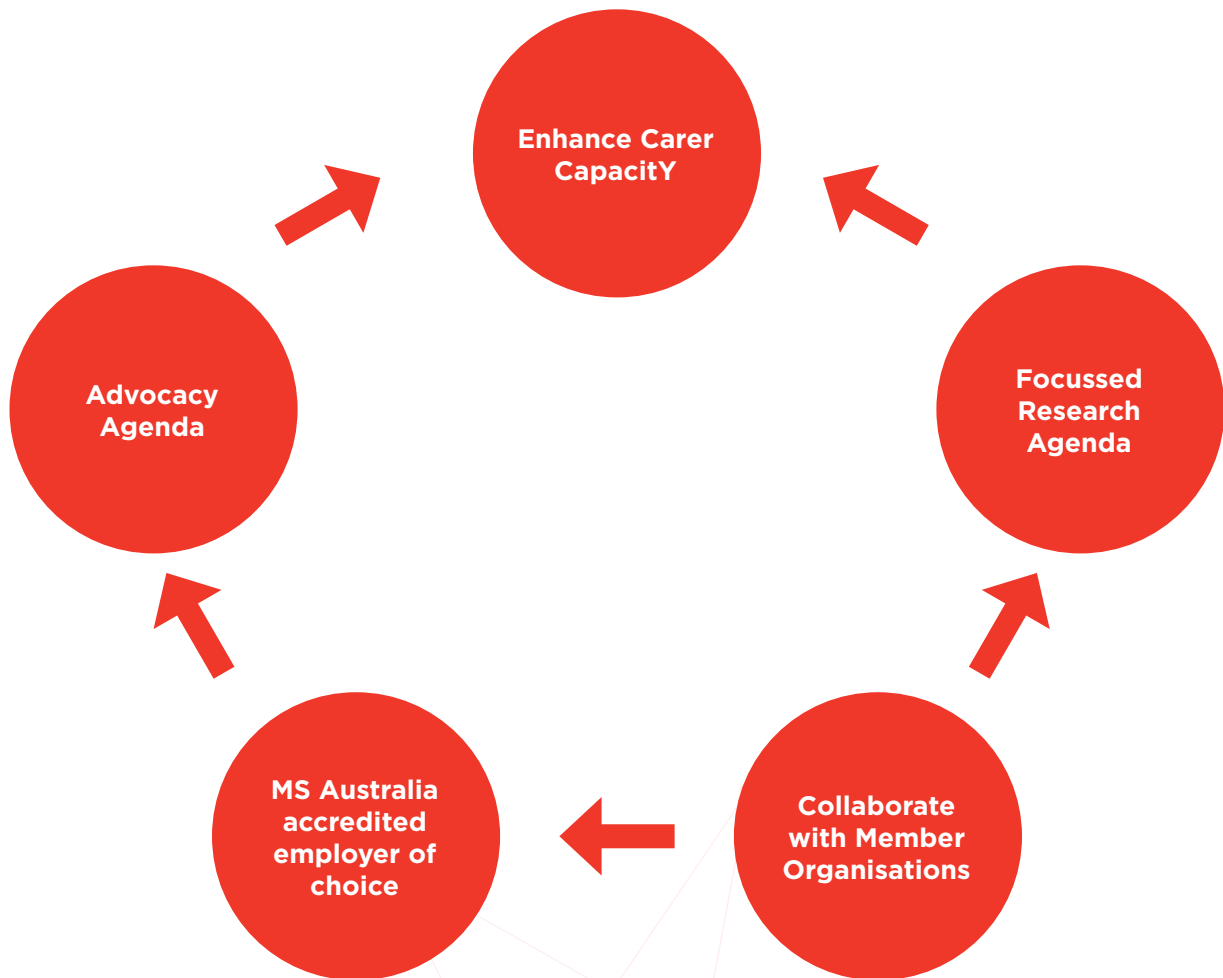
MS Australia will prioritise carers by developing a project specifically focussing on carers to improve their wellbeing and quality of life. MS Australia aspires to become a gold standard employer of choice for those living with MS, other neurological and autoimmune conditions and those who identify as carers.

To this end, MS Australia has undertaken a whole-of-organisation approach to support carers, family and friends of those living with MS and other neurological and autoimmune diseases in our day-to-day operations.

The *MS Australia Carer Strategy* is the result of a culmination of activities focussed on illuminating the voice and experience of carers in our governance, research, advocacy and education and awareness activities. This strategy will draw together and build on existing carer-focused work. This project will form part of MS Australia's *Consumer Engagement Roadmap*.

2. THE FIVE PILLARS OF OUR CARER STRATEGY

MS Australia's three business units have a commitment to embedding carers, recognising that those affected by MS have unique experiences and separate needs that should be underpinned by a robust evidence base.



The Carer Strategy consists of five pillars:

- **Focused Research Agenda:** MS Australia's research agenda features high-quality research projects, including a focus on the needs of carers that could facilitate translation and implementation of research outcomes for this cohort.
- **Collaborate with Member Organisations:** We acknowledge the valuable work that is already occurring within our Member Organisations (MO). MS Australia will collaborate further with our MOs to jointly meet the needs of carers.
- **MS Australia Accredited Employer of Choice:** Aspiring to be an employer of choice, we have embarked on a policy, operations and governance priority to become a gold standard employer for people with MS and other neurological and autoimmune diseases.
- **Advocacy Agenda:** We will ensure our advocacy, policy and education and awareness activities include separate resources, a web landing page and strengthening of collaborations with key peak bodies, such as Carers Australia.
- **Enhance Carer Capacity:** Ultimately, we would like to enhance carers' capacity through a range of activities, information provision and education, campaigns and improved access to resources that would improve a carers quality of life and capacity to navigate the various services systems.

3. DESIRED POSITION/OUTCOME

To strengthen our focus on carers, MS Australia’s whole-of-organisation response will include:

Pillar	Project Focus	Description	Business Unit Responsibility	Scheduled Completion	Progress
1. Enhance Carer Capacity	MS Australia wants to develop and embed a people and culture framework that embodies the mission, vision and values of the organisation.	Develop a people and culture framework that embodies our mission	Corporate Services	Framework by 12/2023 Implementation Ongoing	In progress
		Developing a foundation Consumer Engagement Roadmap 2022-2026 for collaboration with our MS community, which incorporate the needs and views of carers.	Corporate Services	June 2023	In progress
		Establish a Lived Experience Expert Panel, which will include people who are carers.	Advocacy and Comms	Ongoing	LEEP Applications open May 2023
2. Focussed Research Agenda	Providing a body of evidence that could improve research translation & inform resource development to improve the Quality of Life (QoL) of carers.	Represent MS Australia on the Research Advisory Committee of the Carer Knowledge Exchange, a partnership project between Carers NSW and the Institute for Public Policy and Governance at the University of Technology Sydney, funded by the NSW Government.	Research	Ongoing	In progress
		Assist the Australian MS Longitudinal Study (AMSLS), one of MS Australia’s collaborative research platforms, and a partnership between MS Australia and the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, University of Tasmania, in developing a carers and support people arm. An NHMRC Partnership Grant application with the Menzies Institute for Medical Research has been submitted to support this.	Research	Ongoing	In progress
		Providing a body of evidence that could improve research translation & inform resource development to improve the Quality of Life (QoL) of carers & support health and wellbeing in MS.	Research	Ongoing	In progress

Pillar	Project Focus	Description	Business Unit Responsibility	Scheduled Completion	Progress
3. MS Australia Accredited Employer of Choice:	To become an employer of choice, we have started to embark on a policy, operations and governance priority to become a gold standard employer for people with MS and other neurological and autoimmune conditions, and their carers.	Qualify for the Carers + Employers accreditation program and implement the Carers + Employers Accreditation framework across our organisation.	Corporate Services	June 2024	Planning phase
4. Collaborating with our Member Organisations	To ensure no duplication occurs and that we are working towards shared outcomes, MS Australia will continue to collaborate closely with our Member Organisations on issues relevant to carers, family and friends of people living with MS.	Commence a mapping of current focus areas and ways that MS Australia can contribute or add to shared outcomes.	Corporate Services	Ongoing	Commenced
5. Advocacy Agenda	Focus our advocacy, policy and education and awareness activities to improve outcomes of carers.	Strengthen our existing collaborations with partners, alliances and stakeholders, like Carers Australia, to enhance the voice of carers within MS Australia.	Advocacy	Ongoing	
		As the leading, trusted provider of MS information, we would like to further develop our existing online resources and produce additional resources and education and awareness activities in collaboration with carers.	Advocacy	Ongoing	