

Healthy Bones Australia Pre-Budget Submission

Healthy Bones Australia

Healthy Bones Australia, formerly Osteoporosis Australia, is Australia's leading consumer body to reduce broken bones and improve bone health across Australia. Healthy Bones Australia (HBA) focuses on increasing community and health professionals' awareness and advocacy to reduce the impact of osteoporosis nationally.

Healthy Bones Australia aims to improve awareness about bone health in the Australian community and reduce fractures. The focus is on communicating the positive and easy steps people can take to improve their bone health and prevent osteoporosis. While also promoting early diagnosis and improved management to reduce the impact of the disease.

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a common disease affecting over 1.2 million Australians. It is a condition where bones become thin, weak, and fragile, such that even a minor bump or accident can cause a broken bone (minimal trauma fracture).

Fortunately, Australians through the PBS have access to multiple effective treatments. Through diagnosis and proper management, the risk of fractures can be more than halved. The Government has a real opportunity to improve Australia's bone health through education, awareness, and early intervention.

Summary of Policies

Healthy Bones Australia has three key policies that we are submitting for consideration:

<p>Pilot Program for Aged Care Bone Health Audit</p> <p>A pilot over three residential aged care sites provides access to the <i>Know Your Bones</i> bone health self-assessment tool for over 1500 residents. The program would encourage residents to undertake a self-assessment via tool and would then track their progress through intervention and therapy before developing a comprehensive report to the Government with clear, achievable recommendations.</p>	<p>\$800,000</p> <p><u>Potential cost saving \$2.5M-\$3M</u></p>
<p>Demonstration Pilot for Fracture Liaison Services</p> <p>A pilot over two hospital sites to provide a protocol for fracture prevention and liaise with relevant general practitioners to engage in discharged patients' follow-up for monitoring ongoing management. Fracture liaison services are proven to increase the identification, diagnosis, and management of osteoporosis in patients with fractures.</p>	<p>\$750,000</p> <p><u>Potential cost saving \$5.8-\$7.6 M</u></p>
<p>Expansion of the Know Your Bones Self-Assessment Tool</p> <p>The Know Your Bones self-assessment continues to be a key asset in identifying and referring people at elevated risk of poor bone health. It is a key instrument in Australia's preventative bone health arsenal as recognised in the National Strategic Action Plan for Osteoporosis 2019. Expanding <i>Know Your Bones'</i> reach to 500,000 Australians will allow more people to be aware of their bone health and, if needed, seek advice from their primary care GP.</p>	<p>\$500,000</p> <p><u>Potential cost saving \$7M - \$9.5M M</u></p>
<p>Total</p> <p>Potential savings</p>	<p>\$2.05M</p> <p>\$15.3 – \$20.1M</p>

**\$1 on Reducing Fracture Risk
potentially saves
\$8 -10 in Future Healthcare
Expense**

Who is Healthy Bones Australia?

Healthy Bones Australia (HBA) aims to improve awareness about bone health in the Australian community and reduce fractures. Healthy Bones Australia focuses on the following key objectives:

- Increase community awareness throughout Australia to protect bone health
- Encourage prevention
- Improve GP and other health professionals understanding of bone health to promote improved management
- Work with Federal and State governments to plan and implement strategies to improve bone health
- Fund bone-related research

HBA's task is to communicate the positive and easy steps people can take to improve their bone health and prevent osteoporosis. When osteoporosis is diagnosed, there are effective treatments available to prevent bone loss.

In the past five years, Healthy Bones Australia has served our community by:

- Developed and implemented the *Know Your Bones* online self-assessment tool already completed by over 90,000 Australians. This tool serves as a self-assessment, with participants receiving a risk report that their local GP can review.
- Launching the National Strategic Osteoporosis Action Plan with Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt outlining key priority areas for osteoporosis prevention and management in Australia.
- Implementing activity under crucial priority areas of the National Strategic Action Plan, including
 - working with RACGP to review and update clinical guidelines
 - hosting national stakeholder and community forum and releasing Forum Statement
 - developing Community Risk Report utilising data from *Know Your Bones* program- to identify gaps in care
 - Developing pilot intervention program working with Primary Care to capture high-risk patients
- Working with Federal and State Health Ministers on the issue of fracture liaison service best practice model for a proposed pilot for in-hospital fracture prevention services linked to general practice and PHNs

Healthy Bones Australia is a lean organisation, while registered as a large charity, we only have 3.5 FTE employees (2 of whom are full time). Our focus remains exclusively on providing bone health information and services to the community and health professionals.

Osteoporosis and its effect on the community

Osteoporosis is a common disease affecting over 1.2 million Australians and leading to over 183,000 fractures annually. The condition occurs where bones become weak and fragile, leading to an increased risk of breaking a bone from a minor bump or incident (known as minimal trauma fracture). Such events might include falling out of a bed or chair or tripping and falling while walking. Fractures due to osteoporosis can result in chronic pain, disability, loss of independence and premature death.

Risk factors associated with the development of osteoporosis include increasing age, family history, minimal trauma fractures, low vitamin D levels, low intake of calcium, low body weight, smoking, excess alcohol consumption, and physical inactivity. Specific medical conditions and medications impact bone health for example, long-term corticosteroid

Every year osteoporosis cost Australia over \$3.82 billion 67% of which can be directly attributed to the cost of fractures.

use, reduced oestrogen levels or low testosterone levels, malabsorption disorders such as coeliac disease, certain hormonal disorders such as thyroxine excess, and specific breast and prostate cancer treatments.

Fortunately, effective treatments are available. Through diagnosis and proper treatment, the risk of fractures can be halved. Australia has a real opportunity to improve the nations bone health through education, awareness and earlier intervention. For every dollar spent in fracture reduction of improving bone health and awareness, \$8-10 is saved in future healthcare expenses.

Pilot Program for Aged Care Bone Health Audit

\$800,000

Overview

Know Your Bones is a highly effective self-assessment tool that allows individuals to assess their bone health and generate a report explaining their risk results and personalised recommendations.

To date, over 90,000 Australians have already completed this vital self-assessment, with many being advised that they may be at increased risk of initial or further fractures.

Unfortunately, far too many Australians living in residential aged care are not aware of their bone health or this simple self-assessment tool. Furthermore, there remain significant evidence gaps regarding the pathways taken to intervention.

People over 70yrs are at an elevated of poor bone health. Yet there are government bone assessment programs in residential aged care setting in Australia.

Pilot Program

The Pilot Aged Care Bone Health Audit aims to resolve the absence of awareness of and data relating to bone health in residential aged care by:

- Introducing the *Know Your Bones* self-assessment tool into residential aged care
- Working across three residential aged care sites with an estimated reach of 1500 residents
- Appropriately direct individual to primary care support for analysis of their self-assessment
- Monitor the interventions and therapies arising from the primary care engagement.
- Develop a comprehensive report on the risks found through this testing
- Provide recommendations to Government on how to reduce the risk associated with bone health in residential aged care

It is anticipated that the pilot, including site selection, testing, initial interventions and therapies, and the drafting and submission of the report could be concluded within one year.

Analysis of Cost:

The pilot is expected to cost \$800K; however, it is anticipated that the pilot could uncover savings in excess of \$3M

Planning Phase	Liaising with aged care providers and developing awareness materials to facilitate and promote the Pilot Program.	\$130K
Self-Assessment Phase	Working with aged care providers to encourage and support residents to undertake a self-assessment.	\$200K
Primary Care Phase	Working with aged care and primary care providers to direct patients to primary care providers as needed.	\$150K
Intervention Phase	Supporting residents and primary care providers to undertake interventions and gathering data on interventions undertaken.	\$110K
Reporting Phase	Developing a comprehensive report to Government on Bone Health in residential aged care and the interventions undertaken.	\$120K
Project Mgt/ Admin		\$90K
Total		\$800K

Advantage to the Australian People

93.6%¹ of people in permanent residential care are over the age of 70. A recent review of data from the *Know Your Bones* self-assessment tool found that only 59% of those over 70 were sure they had completed a Bone Mineral Density Test.

This program is essential to understand the extent of poor bone health in residential aged care, the interventions undertaken, and the opportunities to identify at-risk Australians prior to a fracture event. This will, in turn, reduce the fracture associated burden on the healthcare system from undiagnosed poor bone health.

Over 70s
1 in 4 *Know Your Bones*
respondents
90%+ of the residential aged
care population.

By providing clear pathways to therapies and interventions for those in residential aged care, GPs will be able to prevent more fractures. The annual cost of minimal trauma fractures is expected to exceed \$2.59 billion in 2022.

¹ <https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/Topics/People-using-aged-care#Aged%20care%20use%20and%20age>

Expansion of Fracture Liaison Services

\$750,000

Overview

Fracture Liaison Services, commonly known as FLS, are coordinator-based secondary fracture prevention services implemented by health care systems for the treatment of osteoporotic patients. By having a FLS embedded into hospitals, they can screen any persons who present with fractures; if a FLS can respond to the first fracture, they significantly reduce the chance of a second and subsequent fracture.

The FLS are designed to:

- **Close the care gap** for fracture patients, 80% of whom are currently never offered screening and/or treatment for osteoporosis
- **Enhance communication** between health care providers by providing a care pathway for the treatment of fragility fracture patients

Left untreated, 1 in 4 women who have had a vertebral (spinal) fracture will go on to experience another fracture within one year. [\(IOF\)](#)

Pilot Program

Demonstration pilot for Fracture Liaison Services (FLS) in hospital and follow up with GPs in the related health area. The pilot would be run over two sites (listed below) and run for a period of 12-18 months before a review of the program is undertaken.

Analysis of Costs

Program administration	Healthy Bones Australia project management of pilot program	\$70K
Hospital sites (2 sites)	<p>Launceston General Hospital (TAS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FLS Co-ordinator • Specialist time capacity <p>Canberra Hospital (ACT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol for referrals to fracture prevention clinic (250K per site) • Communication protocol to GPs FLS Co-ordinator 	\$500K
Follow Up to GPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication to GPs and relevant PHNs • Survey to follow up the management of each patient from the hospital fracture prevention clinic • Summary of outcomes 	\$100K
Overall Analysis of outcomes	Healthy Bones Australia to analyse outcomes of the program	\$80K
	Healthy Bones Australia to provide a report and recommendations to the Government derived from the outcomes of the pilot.	
	Total	\$750K

Advantage to the Australian People

This program is essential to reduce fractures and the associated burden on the healthcare system from undiagnosed osteoporosis by implementing efficient capture of patients following a fracture to ensure appropriate diagnosis and management to reduce further fractures.

Expansion of the Know Your Bones Self-Assessment Tool

\$500,000 over two years

Overview

The *Know Your Bones* self-assessment tool continues to be a key asset in identifying and referring people at elevated risk of poor bone health. *Know Your Bones* is a critical instrument in Australia's preventative bone health arsenal, as is demonstrated by its inclusion in the National Strategic Action Plan for Osteoporosis 2019 under objective 1.1 - Increase community awareness and understanding of the importance of bone health and osteoporosis, including its risk factors and prevention.

Know Your Bones is a beneficial tool and based on Australian research, which can be accessed by metro and rural/remote communities alike. Healthy Bones Australia has released 2 Community Risk Reports of data from this initiative, the most recent being on World Osteoporosis Day 2020. Preventive health solutions in Bone Health present a clear economic case; for every dollar spent on reducing fracture risk, eight to ten dollars are potentially saved in future healthcare expenses. The *Know Your Bones* self-assessment tool has already been engaged by over 350,000 people resulting in over 90,000 complete self-assessments.

Program

The extended *Know Your Bones* program would build on Healthy Bones Australia's existing work to increase the awareness and uptake of this critical resource. *Know Your Bones* is currently promoted through methods such as:

- Targeted women's health and prevention magazines
- Digital media placements and specific e-newsletters
- Engagement with relevant organisations, including the Country Women's Association (CWA)

The proposed expansion would see the total number of people have engaged with the tool reach 500,000 and almost 150,000 complete self-assessments. The extension program would run for two years with an aim for 75,000 additional visitors a year, equivalent to over 200 per day!

This would be achieved by expanding existing, proven methods of promotion, including:

- Increase specific prime time radio placements.
- Expansion of existing collateral materials, including brochures for patients and primary care professionals.
- Expansion of existing media placements to include the 40-50 age group that is not currently targeted is an emerging risk demographic.

In addition to the above-proven methods, Healthy Bones Australia would also promote the self-assessment via the following additional best practice methods:

- Major network and publications, including Woman's Weekly and morning TV segments.
- Online video with targeted social media advertising with *Know Your Bones* ambassador Michelle Bridges.
- Additional men's publications have not been engaged to capture the at-risk male population.

After the two-year extension, Healthy Bones Australia would conduct a comprehensive analysis of the anonymised data gathered to report to the Government on the state of bone health in Australia. This would be done by producing the third edition of the *Know Your Bones* Community Risk Report.

Analysis of Costs

Planning Phase	Working with internal and external digital health experts to analyse the most effective methods to increase the awareness and uptake of this critical resource. Until this phase, Healthy Bones Australia would continue its existing awareness program to ensure continuity of <i>Know Your Bones</i> promotion.	\$40K
Awareness Phase	Extension of existing methods	This funding would go towards the expansion of existing, proven methods of raising awareness. \$145K
	Additional methods	This funding would go towards the introduction of additional best-practice methods of raising awareness. \$245K
Reporting Phase	Developing a comprehensive report to Government on Bone Health in residential aged care and the interventions undertaken.	\$70K
Total		\$500K

Advantage to the Australian People

Know Your Bones is Australia's leading preventative bone health tool. By referring people with risk factors to Primary Care, they may be eligible for therapies and interventions. These interventions can significantly reduce the risk of fracture. By reducing fracture risk, Australia stands to save ten to sixteen dollars for each dollar invested in preventive programs, such as *Know Your Bones*.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Healthy Bones Australia appreciated the Government's work and advocacy in this space and looks forward to working together with the Government into the future to deliver our three key policy areas of Bone Health in residential aged care, Fracture Liaison Services (FLS), and the expansion of *Know your Bones*, with potential savings to Government of \$15.3 M to \$20.1M.

For more information on Healthy Bones Australia please visit our website www.healthybonesaustralia.org.au

Alternatively, you can contact our CEO, Greg Lyubomirsky via email at greg@healthybonesaustralia.org.au