### The General Facts

- An estimated **2,500,000 people around the world** have multiple sclerosis (MS).

- An estimated **16,000 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.**

- The MS Society of NSW/Vic has over **8,500 registered clients.**

- 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.

### 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

### 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

### How you can help

- **Call 1800 CURE MS** to make a donation or for more information

- **Volunteer** your time to the MS Society of 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)

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For more information about MS and the MS Society of NSW/VIC please visit: [www.msaustralia.org.au/nswvic](http://www.msaustralia.org.au/nswvic)