

Monday August 2, 2021

## Helping first nations communities thrive after stroke

A booklet, specially designed to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people live well after stroke, is now available.

Stroke Foundation launched *Our Stroke Journey* today to mark [National Stroke Week \(Aug 2 - 8\)](#).

Stroke Foundation National Manager StrokeConnect Jude Czerenkowski said this resource represents a big step forward in ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people get the information and support they need after stroke.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are twice as likely to be hospitalised with stroke than non-indigenous Australians,” Ms Czerenkowski said.

“Most people don’t know much about stroke. Everyone needs access to evidence-based, easy-to-understand information after a stroke.

“We have worked with an incredible group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors of stroke, carers and health workers to create *Our Stroke Journey*. They have shared their stories and expertise with us and we are incredibly grateful.”

“This booklet covers everything Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need to know to take their place at the centre of their care, look after their health and live a good life after a stroke.”

Proud Kooma man Joe Miller has experienced a number of strokes since 2012 and said he would have found *Our Stroke Journey* incredibly beneficial at the time.

“Having a stroke is a scary experience and it can change your life in an instant,” Joe said.

“After my first stroke, I lost independence and positivity for around six months. I needed help to walk, I felt alone and became quite depressed.

“But this booklet includes stories from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors of stroke, their loved ones, health workers and even a neurologist. These stories provide hope that good outcomes are possible at a time when everything feels overwhelming.

“It also highlights the steps to take to live a healthier life and reduce stroke risk. I quit drinking and smoking and I am more well now than I have ever been.”

Thanks to the generous support of Stroke Foundation donors *Our Stroke Journey* has been developed with survivors of stroke and their families, health professionals, researchers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

*Our Stroke Journey* is available on the Stroke Foundation's website to download or you can call StrokeLine (1800 787 653) to request a copy.

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Joe added: “One of the big problems is too many people stay at home when they experience stroke symptoms rather than calling triple zero (000) and getting to hospital straight away. I was lucky I knew the F.A.S.T. test.”

Think F.A.S.T and ask these questions if you suspect a stroke:

**Face** – Check their face. Has their mouth drooped?

**Arms** – Can they lift both arms?

**Speech** – Is their speech slurred? Do they understand you?

**Time** – Time is critical. If you see any of these signs, call triple zero (000) straight away.

National Stroke Week is the Stroke Foundation’s annual awareness campaign. More details [here](#).

*Interviews available on request*

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people stroke statistics compared with non-Indigenous Australians**

- Hospitalisation rates for stroke are 1.6 times as high.
- Death rates for stroke are 1.3 times as high.
- The burden of disease for stroke is 2.3 times as high.
- The median age of onset of first-ever stroke in Aboriginal patients (54 years), was 17 years younger than in non-Indigenous patients.



**Image:** Survivor of stroke Joe Miller believes *Our Stroke Journey* is much needed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait survivors of stroke, their families, and carers.

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