



# Falls Prevention Alliance Australia

Pre-Budget Submission 26/27

January 30, 2026



## Executive summary

Falls are a leading cause of hospitalisation and death for older Australians and create the fastest-growing **and most preventable** pressure on our health and aged care systems, older individuals and their families.

Over 130,000 Australians aged 65+ are hospitalised each year after a fall, consuming 1.2 million+ hospital bed days, and costing health systems \$3+ billion.<sup>1</sup> Close to 6000 older Australians die from a fall each year.

**We propose three targeted actions for a coordinated national approach to falls prevention:**

1. **Establish a national falls prevention action plan** to provide Commonwealth leadership, coordination and accountability.
2. **Implement a national media and public engagement strategy** to re-position falls as a preventable population health issue.
3. **Enable funded pathways for early falls prevention across systems**, supporting evidence-informed exercise delivered through individual, group-based and digitally enabled models across Medicare, population health and aged care.

With the population aged 65 years and over projected to grow by more than 30% by 2030,<sup>2</sup> fall-related hospitalisations, emergency department presentations and admissions to residential aged care will increase rapidly unless effective prevention is implemented at scale.

Falls are not an inevitable consequence of ageing. Strong national and international evidence-informed guidelines recommend interventions such as balance and strength exercise, home safety modification and regular health checks to reduce falls by 30% within 12 months. When delivered early and at scale, these interventions could reduce demand on primary care, aged care and hospitals, and improve independence and quality of life for older Australians.<sup>3</sup>

The proposed initiatives are designed to be **budget neutral over time, with modest upfront investment offset** by delayed entry into residential aged care, fewer primary care consultations, reduced hospital demand and avoided ambulance call-outs. The **Falls Prevention Alliance Australia**, a national coalition of over 50 academic, professional and consumer organisations, stands ready to partner with Governments on delivery, monitoring and reporting.

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<sup>1</sup> NSW Clinical Excellence Commission. *Fall Prevention in NSW White Paper 2023*.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. *Older Australians*. 02 July 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Commission of Safety and Quality in Health Care. *Preventing Falls and Harm from Falls in Older People: Best Practice Guidelines*. 2025.



In 2024, there were 4.6 million Australians aged 65+. In 2040, there will be **over 6 million**.



EVERY DAY, 400 Australians aged 65+ have a fall that **puts them in hospital**.

Older Australians hospitalised yearly due to a fall



**133,000** in 2024



**200,000** by 2040

Older Australians deaths each year from a fall



**6,200** in 2024



**8,000** by 2040



In 2024, treatment of injuries from falls in **older people** came at a price tag of **\$3 billion**.



In 2024, deaths from falls claimed almost **four times as many** lives as road traffic accidents. Falls accounted for 43% of injury hospitalisations versus 11% for road traffic accidents.



There is one fall-related visit to an emergency department by Australians aged 65+ every **2 minutes 30 seconds**.



Admissions to aged care is **twice as likely** for those hospitalised for a fall than for other reasons.



Appropriate exercise, home safety modifications and regular health checks can **reduce falls by 30% in 12 months**.

## Who we are

The Falls Prevention Alliance Australia is a national coalition established to reduce falls and fall-related injuries among older Australians. The Alliance was formed in 2025 following a national roundtable that brought together experts, community leaders, health professionals, researchers, service providers and people with lived experience.

The Alliance brings together over 50 academic, professional and consumer organisations and over 200 individuals from across health, aged care, research, community and advocacy sectors.

Our purpose is to drive coordinated, evidence-informed action on falls prevention by raising awareness, strengthening cross-sector collaboration and advocating for policy and system-level change, including the need for a national approach to falls prevention. The Alliance's rapidly growing membership reflects strong national support for action to reduce the significant and preventable impact of falls on individuals, communities and Australia's health system.

[www.fallspreventionalliance.org.au](http://www.fallspreventionalliance.org.au)

Australia and New Zealand Falls Prevention Society	Centre for Research Excellence on Falls Prevention	Rotary South Pacific	Neuroscience Research Australia
Institute for Musculoskeletal Health	Injury Matters Western Australia	University of Sydney	University of New South Wales
University of Melbourne	Sydney Musculoskeletal Research	Australia & New Zealand Society for Geriatric Medicine	Australian Rheumatology Association
National Ageing Research Institute	Public Health Association Australia	Australian Physiotherapy Association	Exercise & Sport Science Australia
Older Women's Network NSW	Council of the Ageing NSW	The Heart Foundation	Asia-Pacific Society for Physical Activity
Monash Partners	Monash Health Southeast Public Health Unit	Western Alliance Academic Health Science Centre	Melbourne Academic Centre for Health
Monash University Rehabilitation Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research	Council of the Ageing ACT	Chinese Australian Services Society	Occupational Therapy Australia
Parkinson's Australia	Optometry Australia	Share SMR Inc	Inner West Neighbourhood Aid
Independent Living Australia	Seniors Fitness	Ripe Dance	Kooweerup Regional Health Service
Body Revolution	Sam's Yoga	Livewell Health	Strive Motion
Stepping On	AustraVita	Health@520	Juntos Marketing
Champion Life	Collective Leisure	Australian Baroque Riding Academy	Gold Moves
Dance4Wellbeing	LiveLife	Catholic Healthcare	HomeGuardian.ai

## Priority Issues and Recommendations

### 1. National Falls Prevention Action Plan

#### **Issue**

Falls are a major and preventable cause of injury, yet Australia lacks national leadership, a coordinated strategy and a clearly accountable agency for prevention. Responsibility is fragmented across health, aged care and community systems, and falls are not treated as a core national health priority. Key gaps include the absence of national economic modelling, a comprehensive stocktake of programs and a coherent narrative explaining why falls remain overlooked despite their scale and cost.

#### **Recommendation**

Establish and resource a National Falls Prevention Action Plan with clear Commonwealth leadership. This should include:

- appointing a lead agency with cross-portfolio authority;
- undertaking a national stocktake of existing falls prevention programs;
- commissioning national economic and return-on-investment modelling to inform Budget decisions and future scale-up;
- integrating falls prevention across Medicare, population health and aged care reforms; and
- introducing annual national reporting on outcomes and system impact.

### 2. National Media and Public Engagement Strategy

#### **Issue**

Falls are widely perceived as an inevitable part of ageing rather than a preventable health issue. This perception limits political urgency and obscures the systemic drivers, inequities, educational gaps and economic costs associated with falls. Media coverage continues to focus on individual incidents rather than broader policy and system failures.

#### **Recommendation**

Support a coordinated national media and public engagement strategy in partnership with the Falls Prevention Alliance Australia. This should leverage a national Falls Prevention Month, lived experience storytelling, respected public advocates and a National Falls Prevention Forum to shift public understanding and build sustained political momentum for action.

### 3. Funding Mechanisms for Early Falls Prevention

#### **Issue**

There is no funded pathway for early falls prevention in primary care. Current Medicare settings do not support structured, evidence-informed falls prevention interventions. Community-based programs remain small-scale, short-term and unevenly distributed. As a result, preventable hospitalisations continue to rise.

#### **Recommendation**

Establish a coordinated, funding approach for falls prevention that operates across Medicare, aged care, disability and population health systems. This approach will support evidence-informed exercise for falls prevention, aligned with national guidelines. Funding is required to support flexible delivery models, including individual, group-based and digitally enabled programs to ensure scalable, equitable access across primary care and aged care settings. Implementation should be enabled through:

- Primary Health Networks, to commission and integrate programs within primary care;
- population health and injury prevention budgets, to support place-based, preventive delivery in the community;
- aged care funding streams, including *Support at Home*, to embed falls prevention as a routine component of ageing-well strategies; and
- disability service and NDIS funding pathways, where participants are at elevated risk of falls.