Falls Prevention Alliance Australia

Falls prevention investment urgently needed: a call to action

The problem

Falls among older Australians are a growing but neglected public health crisis devastating individuals, families and health systems. One in three Australians aged 65+ fall each year. Every day, more than 430 older people are hospitalised due to a fall. Falls cost our health services $5.7 billion each year. By 2040, those numbers will be 38% higher.

Falls are not an inevitable part of ageing. Many Australians are unaware that falls are preventable, and do not have access to evidence-based solutions, such as exercise. Despite the high personal cost of falls and the high cost to our health system, Australia has no current national policy or strategy for falls prevention.

What we are seeking

The Falls Prevention Alliance Australia, a coalition of 80+ organisations and 250+ individuals from community, advocacy, health and academic organisations, has three urgent asks for the Australian government:

01

Media campaign and associated website

To raise awareness of the seriousness of falls, and provide fall prevention information for community members and health professionals ($1.2 million).

02

National action plan

To initiate a national action plan to coordinate fall prevention strategies across sectors and jurisdictions ($800k).

03

Modelling of funding options

To increase equity of access to proven fall prevention programs and services ($800K).

This priority investment of $2.8 million would significantly begin to reduce the burden of falls for older individuals and health systems. If just 10% of falls were prevented $570 million would be saved each year.

This call for investment is endorsed by 79 organisational members and 140 individual members of the Falls Prevention Alliance Australia (see pages 7-8 and www.fallspreventionalliance.org.au).

The problem of falls

The global population is ageing rapidly[1] and Australia is no exception.[2] Injuries from falls in Australians aged 65+ lead to 157,000 annual hospital admissions.[3] Annual health spending on falls in Australia exceeds $5.7 billion.[4] Falls injuries also kill 18 older Australians every day, more than 6400 people each year.[3] Falls are the leading cause of injury hospitalisation[3] and 7th leading cause of years of life lost in Australians of all ages.[5] Falls can have lasting emotional and social impacts through loss of confidence: *"Since I fell I have virtually given up walking on my own. I'm nervous of falling… I'm not sure how to re-establish confidence."*[6]

Without effective prevention strategies, earlier intervention, and improved models of care, falls will continue to place escalating strain on Australia's health and aged care systems. The cost of falls will continue increasing as Australia's population ages.

Policy research found no current Australian falls prevention policy or strategy.[7] Internationally, governments are recognising falls prevention as a key strategy for healthy ageing. For example, the UK Parliament recently concluded that increasing physical activity is one of the safest and most cost-effective interventions available to reduce frailty, falls and loss of independence, while helping shift health systems from treatment to prevention.[8]



Figure 1: key statistics on falls.[2,3,4]

1 United Nations. World Population Prospects 2024. 2025.
2 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Older Australians. 2024.
3 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Injury in Australia. 2026.
4 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Health system spending on disease and injury in Australia 2024-25. 2026.
5 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Causes of Death Australia 2025.
6 Why Investing in Falls Prevention Across Australia can't wait. 2022. https://anzfallsprevention.org/action-on-falls-prevention/
7 Costa N, Ambrens M, Delbaere K, Wilson L, Li A, Sherrington C. A systems approach to assist policy action to prevent falls among community-dwelling older people in Australia. Public Health Research & Practice. 2024;34:e3412405.
8 UK. https://committees.parliament.uk/work/9230/healthy-ageing-physical-activity-in-an-ageing-society/publications/



The Falls Prevention Alliance Australia

The Falls Prevention Alliance Australia is a national coalition established to reduce falls and fall-related injuries among older Australians. Launched in 2025 following a national roundtable of experts, community leaders, health professionals, researchers, service providers and lived experience advocates, the Alliance brings together individuals and organisations from across health, aged care, disability care, research, community and advocacy sectors.

The **Alliance's purpose** is to drive co-ordinated, evidence-based action on falls prevention by raising awareness, strengthening collaboration, and advocating for policy and system-level change, including the need for a national approach to falls prevention.

Since its launch in October 2025 (see picture above), the Alliance has grown to over 70 organisational and 250 individual members, reflecting strong national support for action to reduce the significant and preventable impact of falls on individuals, communities and Australia's health system.

Fall prevention evidence overview

Falls prevention works. Evidence from hundreds of studies shows that targeted interventions, including exercise, can reduce falls by 20-30% over 12 months. The 2025 Australian Falls Prevention Guidelines recommend a tiered approach: encouraging regular physical activity, particularly exercises that improve balance and strength; providing tailored support from health and exercise professionals for people at increased risk; and delivering comprehensive, multi-factor interventions for people with multiple risk factors or recurrent falls.

Community: 0-1 falls/year

- Community and/or home exercise: balance, functional strength **(1A)**
- Individualised exercise if higher risk **(1A)**
- Home safety if higher risk **(1A)**
- Single interventions if indicated: cataract surgery **(1A)**, eyewear **(2B)**, medicine review **(2B)**, Vit D **(1B)**, podiatry **(1A)**, home safety, pacemaker **(2B)**

Community: 2+ falls/year

- Individualised exercise **(1A)**
- Tailored interventions after individualised assessment from health professional: cataract surgery, eyewear, medicines review, Vit D, podiatry, home safety, pacemaker, assistive devices, and strategies to address concerns about falling, anxiety, depression and cognitive impairment **(1B)**

2025 Australian Falls Guideline[9] Recommendations.
1, Strong evidence; **2**, Conditional evidence; **A**, High certainty; **B**, Intermediate certainty; **C**, Low certainty.

Three urgent asks

The Falls Prevention Alliance Australia has three key, urgent asks of the Australian Government that will make a real difference to the rate of falls in Australia. This priority investment of $2.8 million would start to reduce the burden of falls for older individuals and health systems. If 10% of falls were prevented, $570 millionwould be saved annually.

01

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9 Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. Preventing Falls and Harm from Falls in Older People: Best Practice Guidelines. Australian Commission in Safety and Quality in Health Care;2025.

01 Media campaign and associated website

What we hope to achieve

Reframe falls as preventable and provide clear, accurate information for community members and health professionals about evidence-based fall prevention. We seek to shift public and professional perceptions so that falls are widely recognised as preventable rather than an inevitable part of ageing. Our vision is for all Australians to be engaged in proven preventive actions including exercise known to prevent falls from mid-life, and regular discussion of falls prevention with their General Practitioner and other health care professionals.

Why it's important

The perception that falls are an inevitable part of ageing reduces demand for preventive interventions and leads to a lack of prioritisation by health services and individuals. Without a strong public narrative, and access to trusted information, falls remain largely invisible despite their significant health, social and economic impacts.

What is needed to achieve this

$1.2 million to fund a national mass media campaign ($960K) and a national website ($240k).

02 National falls prevention action plan

What we hope to achieve

A national system-wide plan for falls prevention that outlines where evidence-based falls prevention should be embedded across health, aged care and community sectors and local, state and federal jurisdictions. Such a plan would be cooperatively developed in consultation with stakeholders across sectors and jurisdictions.

Why it's important

Falls prevention in Australia is currently fragmented, with no single body responsible for co-ordination, no national targets, and limited accountability. This results in inconsistent access to effective programs, missed opportunities to intervene early and impacts the safety and wellbeing of Australians. Falls prevention action needs to consider multiple sectors but is not yet treated as a shared national priority.

What is needed to achieve this

$800K to collaboratively develop a national falls prevention action plan with clear goals, targets and timelines. Costs would include advertising and promotion, community engagement, roundtable events, document production and project management.

03 Modelling of options for federal funding of fall prevention

What we hope to achieve

Sustainable, equitable funding pathways that enable early, evidence-based falls prevention programs and services delivered at scale are needed across Australia. Yet there are multiple options for targeted investment. We need improved modelling based on evidence to guide investment choices and enable the most cost-effective solutions to be chosen.

We propose rapid modelling over 12 months to identify the most cost-effective mechanisms as the first of two critical steps. This modelling would directly inform the next step, funding decisions on implementation of programs and services to prevent falls.

Why it's important

The current system is heavily focused on treating injuries after a fall rather than preventing them. This reactive approach is costly, inefficient and unsustainable. Although strong evidence supports interventions such as balance and strength exercise, access remains limited without dedicated funding—particularly for those most at risk.

Funding reform is critical to translate strategy and awareness into real-world impact. Without it, preventable falls, hospitalisations and loss of independence will continue to rise as our population becomes older and more frail.

What is needed to achieve this

We will undertake modelling to test and compare funding mechanisms across the spectrum of service delivery approaches. We have an existing proof of concept model that could be expanded for $800K.

The modelling would test and compare different funding mechanisms across the spectrum of service-delivery. This includes such things as clinician-led group and individual sessions, such as a Medicare Benefits Schedule item modelled on the existing group exercise pathway for people with type 2 diabetes, community-based programs, remote or technology-enabled approaches. It would assess options for cost-effectiveness, feasibility, reach, and equity. This analysis would ensure Federal investment is directed to the mechanism most likely to deliver sustainable and scalable impact.

Endorsing organisations

Professional organisations

ANZSGM

audiology australia

Australian Rheumatology Association

ESSA Exercise & Sports Science Australia

Occupational Therapy Australia

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia

RMSANZ Rehabilitation Medicine Society of Australia and New Zealand

Public Health Association Australia

Dietitians Australia

AUSactive

Australian Physiotherapy Association

aspa Asia-Pacific Society for Physical Activity

Pilates Association Australia

Service providers

iLA

Kai'Mia Community

Inner West Neighbour Aid

Dementia Inclusive Ballina Respect • Support • Empower

Australian Baroque Riding Academy

Champion Life Seniors

Collective Leisure

dance4wellbeing

Gold Moves Australia

Life Moves Dance Dare to Thrive!

LiveLife Personal Mobile Alarms

salveo healthcare

seniorsfitness ageing with confidence

Allied Rehab Therapies

Stepping On

Strive Motion Regain Momentum

Juntos Marketing. For Good

Queensland Ballet Community Health Institute

RIPE Dance Really is Possible for Everyone

CASS

Academic and health organisations

Community organisations

Also endorsed by

Monash University Rehabilitation Ageing and Independent Living (RAIL) Research Centre, Walk Sydney, Dr Sophie Scamps MP (Member for Mackellar), Alinea Inc, Victorian Falls Prevention Alliance, Whiddon, The Junction Neighbourhood Centre, Melville Cares, Intertile Research, Health Consumers' Council WA, Amplar Health, Rotary Club of Lismore, Rotary District 9660, Rotary Club of Springwood.

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