

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

Date: Tuesday 5 March 2024

Australians impacted by Long COVID will come together on 15th March 2024 for the second International Long COVID Awareness Day

Landmarks all over Australia will be lit up in teal on or around 15th March to mark the day. A current list can be found on our [Instagram](#) page.

The Long COVID Support Australia Community will be observing the day by taking a selfie of themselves lying down with the hashtag #WakeUpToLongCovid to highlight awareness and the need for the government to implement their own recommendations following a Parliamentary Inquiry into Long COVID and Repeated Infections.

The three colours in our Long COVID Awareness ribbon represent the past, present and future of Long COVID and the heart represents kindness, care and compassion.

Teal: Hope and Support

Grey: Loss and Grief

Black: Loneliness and Isolation



In 2023 Long COVID patients, carers and allies began this [International Long COVID awareness campaign](#) to unite people across the globe to:

- Increase Long COVID visibility
- Prevent COVID infections
- Empower patients
- Share support and resources
- Educate about the symptoms of Long COVID
- Highlight the need to fund relevant research

It is estimated 5-10% of people in Australia experience symptoms for more than three months after a COVID infection, termed Long COVID. According to the Department of Health and Aged Care, there have been more than 11.8 million cases of COVID-19 in Australia. Australia lacks recent data, but we do know that Long COVID contributed to 10% of the total burden of disease from COVID-19 in Australia in the first few months of 2022.¹

In 2023 it was estimated that Long COVID has had a \$5.7 billion impact on GDP annually in Australia alone.²

So far, more than 200 different symptoms have been recorded. In 2023 it was estimated that at least 65 million people worldwide continue to suffer from Long COVID.

¹<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/covid-19/long-covid-in-australia-a-review-of-the-literature/summary>

²<https://www.smh.com.au/national/it-can-t-be-ignored-the-illness-costing-australia-at-least-5-7b-a-year-20230404-p5cy3z.html>



The World Health Organisation defines Long COVID as 'the continuation or development of new symptoms 3 months after the initial SARS-CoV-2 infection, with these symptoms lasting for at least 2 months with no other explanation'.

Following a referral on 1 September 2022 from the Minister for Health and Aged Care, the House Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport commenced the [Inquiry into Long COVID and Repeated COVID Infections](#).

Following the release of [Sick and tired: Casting a long shadow – Australian Government response to the inquiry into long COVID](#), we call on the Labor Government to urgently invest in and implement all nine recommendations made in the initial [report](#). Mark Butler, Health Minister, has only supported two of the recommendations and the rest were either partially supported, supported in principle or were “noted”.

The Australian Government has announced that \$26 million will be invested in research into Long COVID, when patients need treatment now. It has already been four years.

Compared with international standards, Australia’s response is lagging.³ Australian Long COVID sufferers are struggling and have largely been left behind.

Long COVID Support Australia urgently calls on the Labor Government to implement all recommendations from the Parliamentary Inquiry into Long COVID and Repeated COVID Infections. We also urge the Government to:

- Provide access to antiviral medication and other necessary medication under the PBS
- Implement nationwide data collection
- Fund Long COVID training for all medical professionals
- Review access to the NDIS and Disability Support Pension for eligible Long COVID patients
- Resource telehealth services to meet the needs of Long COVID patients
- Provide open, transparent science based public information campaigns about both COVID and Long COVID

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The **Long COVID Support Australia** community exists for people to share experiences, information and resources with others living with Long COVID symptoms, as well as their carers, families and supporters.

³ <https://www.ssph-journal.org/articles/10.3389/phrs.2023.1606084/full>