

Emerge Australia Calls for Government Action During Long COVID Awareness Week, March 9-15, 2026

Over 600,000 Australians living with ME/CFS and long COVID face gaps in education, research funding, and treatment access during Long COVID Awareness Week

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA, March 3, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Emerge Australia](#) is marking Long COVID Awareness Week (March 9-15, 2026) with a series of national initiatives aimed at raising awareness and driving policy change for the over 600,000 Australians living with ME/CFS, long COVID, and associated energy-limiting conditions. ME/CFS alone costs the Australian economy an estimated \$14.5 billion annually. Almost 50% of long COVID patients are known to transition to ME/CFS, with an additional 250,000 Australians already living with the condition.

"Key areas of focus are clinical education, ME/CFS research advancement, enhanced patient and carer support, and improved access to vital services like the NDIS and income support programs."

- Anne Wilson, Chief Executive Officer, EmERGE Australia

Impact on Women

Long COVID Awareness Week coincides with International Women's Day on March 8. Seventy-five percent of ME/CFS patients are women, and a quarter are housebound or bedbound. Research indicates many experience impairment levels comparable to or exceeding those associated with multiple sclerosis, depression, or cancer. Diagnosis delays commonly extend across multiple years, limiting access to treatment and support services.

Parliamentary Event, Tuesday March 10

The Parliamentary Friends of ME/CFS Group will meet at Australia's Parliament House in Canberra, bringing together senior Members of Parliament, researchers, clinicians, policymakers, and people with lived experience of ME/CFS and long COVID. EmERGE Australia is calling on the 48th Parliament to consider investment in GP and clinical education; specialist ME/CFS and long COVID clinics; research funding; and equitable patient access to effective medications and treatments.

New Podcast Season and Journalism Award

During Long COVID Awareness Week, EmERGE Australia will release a new season of its Imagine Podcast, which has surpassed 20,000 listens. The season features EmERGE Australia Ambassador

Professor David Putrino of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York, alongside specialist clinicians and people with lived experience. The 2026 Emerge Australia Awards for Excellence in Long COVID Journalism winners will also be announced, recognising evidence-based reporting that has raised public awareness of these conditions.

"We know clinical education works. In a recent forum, around 30% of doctors were initially unconvinced by these diagnoses - after 90 minutes of education, zero percent were unconvinced. It needs to be scaled." - Professor David Putrino, Emerge Australia Ambassador, Director of Rehabilitation Innovation, Icahn School of Medicine Mount Sinai, New York

Telehealth Clinic Serving Long COVID Patients

Dr Emma Tippett founded Clinic Nineteen, a national telehealth long COVID clinic that has served over 1,500 patients across Australia, including children. Dr Tippett has commented on the government's recent long COVID inquiry findings.

"I was disappointed in the Government's long COVID inquiry findings, which have elected to embed long COVID care into already overstretched chronic care pathways in primary care. Long COVID is an incredibly complex disease with rapidly emerging evidence - patients do better with clinicians who are focused on this condition, remain up to date with evolving pathophysiology and therapeutics, and work within coordinated multidisciplinary teams." - Dr Emma Tippett, Director, Clinic Nineteen; Clinical Research Fellow, Burnet Institute

Patients Share Their Experiences

Henry Barker, 17, contracted COVID at age 13 and continues to live with long COVID and ME/CFS, completing his HSC online. His mother, Jen, also lives with long COVID.

"My message to the Minister of Health is: please make the right medications available. Everyone should be able to equitably access these medications to improve their symptoms - and look at our education system and whether it is catering for all students." - Henry Barker, 17, living with long COVID and ME/CFS

"When Dr Jenny told me I had long COVID, I cried. At last, I felt validated. She really saved my life." - Leonie Cavill, living with long COVID

Media Interview Opportunities

Emerge Australia is making the following spokespeople available for interview: Anne Wilson, CEO, Emerge Australia; Professor David Putrino; Associate Professor Bernard Shiu; Dr Emma Tippett; Henry Barker; Leonie Cavill. A full quote sheet and speaker bios are available on request.

About Emerge Australia

Emerge Australia supports people living with ME/CFS and long COVID through clinical and allied health education, advocacy, biomedical research, and patient support. For more information visit

www.emerge.org.au.

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