

Count ME: A Milestone for ME/CFS Recognition in Australia

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA, July 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a groundbreaking development for the myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) community, ME/CFS will be included in the upcoming Australian Burden of Disease Study (ABDS), set to be released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) in December 2026. This marks the first time since 2003 that ME/CFS will be recognised as a separate condition within the national health framework, a pivotal moment that promises to reshape the landscape of public health for over 250,000 Australians.

The ABDS is the nation's definitive guide for assessing the impact of various diseases and health conditions on the Australian population. By utilising Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs), the study provides a comprehensive measure of health loss, allowing for direct comparisons across a wide spectrum of health issues.

Anne Wilson, CEO of [Emerge Australia](#), expressed her enthusiasm for this significant advancement: "The inclusion of ME/CFS in the ABDS signifies official recognition of the substantial public health burden this condition imposes. It places ME/CFS alongside major health challenges such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, and mental health disorders, paving the way for informed policy development and resource allocation."

The journey to this momentous inclusion has not been easy. ME/CFS was removed from the ABDS in 2011 due to outdated data, leaving a gap in understanding its prevalence and impact. However, following the National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC) ME/CFS Advisory Committee's 2019 recommendation, Emerge Australia has actively advocated for the condition's re-inclusion, presenting robust evidence on its prevalence and socio-economic burden.

"We are incredibly grateful for the collaborative efforts of the AIHW throughout this process," Ms Wilson added. "Their team has demonstrated exceptional skill and commitment, allowing us to contribute our expertise to ensure this outcome reflects the realities faced by those living with ME/CFS."

The inclusion of ME/CFS in the ABDS is not just a set of statistics; it represents a transformative shift in how this condition is perceived and prioritised within the Australian health system. As part of the Count ME campaign, Emerge Australia will continue to elevate awareness surrounding ME/CFS, focusing on key initiatives over the coming months, including:

- Updates on AIHW and ABDS ME/CFS inclusion developments
- Findings from the Emerge Australia Living with ME/CFS and long COVID in Australia: A National Burden of Disease Survey (previously known as Emerge Australia's Health and Wellbeing Study)
- Initiatives for World Severe ME Day
- Impacts of NDIS reforms on the ME/CFS community

This campaign aims to ensure that ME/CFS receives the attention and resources it deserves, ultimately improving the lives of those affected by this often misunderstood and stigmatised condition.

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