

# Government backing stronger bones for women, addressing 2-in-5 missing vital bone tests

***New report reveals diagnosis gap as national campaign boosts early testing & prevention for women 50+***

Two-in-five (40 per cent) Australians who experience a fracture from a minor fall have never had a bone density test, missing the chance to detect and treat osteoporosis early.<sup>1</sup> Healthy Bones Australia and the Albanese Government are joining forces to turn the tide, launching a national drive to boost awareness, prevention and early testing, targeting women most at risk.

The Albanese Government today announced a \$700,000 investment in Healthy Bones Australia's national awareness and education campaign during Osteoporosis Awareness Month. The expanded initiative will fund mobile bone density testing across regional communities and drive a nationwide campaign encouraging Australians aged 50 and over, especially women, to complete the *Know Your Bones* online self-assessment.

Today's funding announcement coincided with the release of the *Know Your Bones Community Risk Report (Fourth Edition)* by Healthy Bones Australia at a Parliamentary Friends of Bone Health event in Canberra.

Based on data from more than 126,500 Australians, Healthy Bones Australia's report revealed nearly half of all minimal trauma fractures occur in adults aged 50 to 69 – a window when early detection and treatment can make a significant difference.<sup>1</sup> The report further identified a gap in fracture care, with only 14 per cent receiving osteoporosis medication post-fracture.<sup>1</sup>

Women are especially vulnerable to osteoporosis, with hormonal changes after menopause accelerating bone loss and increasing the risk of serious fractures that can limit mobility and independence.<sup>2</sup> Despite this, testing and treatment rates remain low.<sup>3</sup> The latest Community Risk Report calls for unified national action: every fracture should trigger a bone health assessment, ensuring Australians receive the care they need before minor injuries can lead to life-altering events.<sup>4</sup>

By extending its investment, the Albanese Government is strengthening its efforts to close this gap – expanding access to testing, improving community awareness, and supporting primary care to identify and manage at-risk patients earlier. The new funding ensures women, particularly those in regional areas, can access vital testing and information to protect their bones.

***Assistant Minister for Health, Ageing and Women, the Hon Rebecca White MP, joined Olympic Gold Medallist and Know Your Bones Ambassador Sally Pearson OAM, alongside leading doctors and advocates at Parliament House today, to call for earlier testing, heightened awareness, and stronger prevention of osteoporotic-related fractures.***

Ms Pearson said the findings highlight the need for Australians to take bone health seriously. During her athletics career, she sustained a complex wrist fracture after clipping a hurdle – an experience that fuels her advocacy today.

"As an athlete, I've seen how serious and disruptive these injuries can be. As an ambassador, I often speak with people who share their stories of difficult recoveries from unexpected fractures.

"Fractures can happen to anyone and can change your life in an instant. Completing the *Know Your Bones* self-assessment is a simple first step to understanding your risk and starting a conversation with your doctor," said Ms Pearson.

"This investment is about prevention and empowerment," Assistant Minister for Health, Ageing and Women, the Hon Rebecca White MP, said.

“Too many Australians – particularly women over 50 – are living with undiagnosed osteoporosis and facing fractures that could have been prevented.

“Osteoporosis hits women hardest, especially in regional communities where access to testing is limited. This funding makes it easier for women to get checked early and stay strong, mobile and independent,” said Minister White.

“Every fracture should trigger a [bone density] test, and every Australian should have the chance to prevent the next one. The Albanese Government is backing practical solutions to improve early detection, strengthen women’s health, and stop avoidable fractures before they happen.”

## Key report findings<sup>1</sup>

- **40 per cent of individuals who reported a minimal trauma fracture (from a minor bump or fall) had not undergone a bone density test.**
- **Only 14 per cent of those with a minimal trauma fracture were taking osteoporosis medication, indicating low treatment rates even post-fracture.**
- **Nearly 50 per cent of all reported minimal trauma fractures occur in Australians aged 50-69 years, highlighting the need for earlier intervention.**
- **35 per cent of *Know Your Bones* respondents had at least one clinical risk factor for poor bone health, among whom, 30 per cent had two or more risk factors (a higher risk group).**
- **Common fracture sites accounting for 87 per cent of all minimal trauma fractures reported (in order) include the foot, wrist, ankle, forearm, ribs, spine, and lower leg.**
- **98 per cent of respondents had at least one lifestyle risk factor for osteoporosis e.g. low calcium intake, physical inactivity, smoking, or vitamin D deficiency.**
- **19 per cent of *Know Your Bones* users were under 50, showing younger Australians are also at risk – especially those living with coeliac disease, hormonal imbalances, or on corticosteroids.**

Healthy Bones Australia CEO, Mr Greg Lyubomirsky, Sydney, welcomed the Albanese Government’s funding, and thanked the Government for its ongoing commitment to bone health. In the lead up to the May 2026 Federal Budget, Mr Lyubomirsky said the new findings are a timely reminder that osteoporosis must be treated as a national chronic health priority, with prevention and early intervention at its core.

“Every fracture – even from a simple bump or fall – should be a clear signal to test, diagnose, and treat before another break occurs. With better awareness and action, thousands of fractures could be prevented each year, sparing Australians from pain, loss of independence, and avoidable hospital stays.”

Healthy Bones Australia Medical Director, and Scientific Advisory Committee Chair, Professor Peter Wong, Sydney, added the report highlights an opportunity for positive change in how osteoporosis is managed in primary care.

“General practitioners play a pivotal frontline role in diagnosing osteoporosis early, and prescribing effective treatment to reduce fracture risk.

“We must act early – identify bone fragility, intervene decisively, and ensure those at risk receive the right care and treatment to reduce the impact of preventable fractures,” Prof Wong said.

## Significant impact on Aussie lives

Consumer advocate, GP practice manager, mum and grandmother living with severe osteoporosis, Elaine, 70, Melbourne, shared the personal toll of a late diagnosis.

“I didn’t know my bones were fragile until I broke them. My late diagnosis has caused years of pain, and restrictions I might have avoided, had my osteoporosis been detected earlier.

“Most heartbreaking is not being able to pick up my grandchildren – something I longed to do,” said Elaine.

“I urge every Australian to take the *Know Your Bones* self-assessment. If you have risk factors for osteoporosis, ask your doctor for a bone density test. Don’t let this happen to you.”

## Report call-to-action<sup>1</sup>

The report calls for:

- **Routine bone density testing for all at-risk individuals, especially post-fracture.**
- **Closing the treatment gap: ensuring those diagnosed with osteoporosis receive earlier investigation, evidence-based treatment, and care to prevent further breaks.**
- **Raising community awareness of bone health: empowering Australians to understand risk factors, and take preventative action.**
- **Promoting lifestyle changes that strengthen bones: regular weight-bearing exercise; adequate calcium and vitamin D intake; smoking cessation, and reducing alcohol consumption.**
- **Providing GPs with clear, practical osteoporosis early detection and management guidelines.**

## About osteoporosis in Australia

- Osteoporosis reduces bone strength, and increases risk of fracture, which can cause pain, disability, and even death.<sup>4</sup>
- Once a fracture occurs, action must be taken to protect bone health, and bone density monitored to gauge improvement.<sup>5</sup>
- Fractures are expensive to treat, and disrupt the lives of patients, and their families/carers.<sup>6</sup>
- Osteoporosis and osteopenia (a precursor to osteoporosis) affect both men and women – men account for up to 30 per cent of fractures and associated costs.<sup>6</sup>
- 6.2 million Australians aged 50+ have poor bone health, leading to more than 196,000 fractures per year.<sup>6</sup>
- 66 per cent of Australians aged 50+ are living with poor bone health (osteoporosis or osteopenia).<sup>6</sup>
- A fracture occurs every 2.7 minutes due to poor bone health.<sup>6</sup>
- Osteopenia and osteoporosis cost the Australian healthcare system AUD 4.9 billion per annum.<sup>6</sup>

## Take action today: Know Your Bones

Know Your Bones is a free, easy-to-use online tool developed by Healthy Bones Australia and the Garvan Institute of Medical Research. It helps Australians assess their risk of osteoporosis and fractures, providing a personalised report to support early discussion, testing, and treatment with their doctor.

👉 [www.knowyourbones.org.au](http://www.knowyourbones.org.au) to take the assessment today.

## About Healthy Bones Australia

Healthy Bones Australia (HBA) is the national peak body representing Australians living with osteoporosis. The organisation leads national efforts to prevent osteoporosis through community education, early diagnosis and improved management to reduce fracture risk. HBA works with consumers, healthcare professionals, policymakers and partner organisations to make bone health a higher national priority.

The Australian Government Department of Health has singled out HBA as an exemplar among Australia's health peak and advisory bodies, commending its leadership and innovation, and recognising it as the benchmark in delivering and implementing the *National Strategic Action Plan on Osteoporosis*.

**For more information and access to educational resources tailored to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, available in eight languages, contact Healthy Bones Australia at 02 9518 8140, visit [healthybonesaustralia.org.au](http://healthybonesaustralia.org.au), or free call 1800 242 141.**

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**To learn more about the *Know Your Bones Community Risk Report*, tee up an interview with a spokesperson overleaf.**

## AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW

<b>EXPERTS</b>	
<b>Prof Peter Wong</b>	Medical Director & Chair, Medical & Scientific Advisory Committee, Healthy Bones Australia; & Head of Rheumatology, Western Sydney Local Health District, <b>SYDNEY (VISITING CANBERRA)</b>
<b>Prof Mark Cooper</b>	Board Member, Healthy Bones Australia; President, Australian & New Zealand Bone & Mineral Society (ANZBMS); Professor of Medicine & Head of Concord Clinical School, University of Sydney, <b>SYDNEY</b>
<b>Mr Greg Lyubomirsky</b>	CEO, Healthy Bones Australia, <b>SYDNEY (VISITING CANBERRA)</b>
<b>Dr Shoshana Sztal – Mazer</b>	Medical Committee Member, Healthy Bones Australia; Endocrinologist; Clinical Lead, Metabolic Bone Service, Department of Endocrinology & Diabetes, Alfred Health, <b>MELBOURNE</b>
<b>Dr Amanda Cox</b>	Member, Healthy Bones Australia Medical Committee & GP, <b>BRISBANE</b>
<b>Prof Charles Inderjeeth</b>	Medical & Scientific Advisory Committee, Healthy Bones Australia; Director of Clinical Training, Sir Charles Gairdner & Osborne Park Health Group; Clinical Professor, University of Western Australia; & Consultant Physician in Rheumatology & Geriatric Medicine, <b>PERTH</b>
<b>HEALTHY BONES AUSTRALIA AMBASSADOR</b>	
<b>Sally Pearson, OAM</b>	Healthy Bones Ambassador, Olympic Gold Medallist, two-time World Champion, sports presenter & mother-of-two, <b>GOLD COAST (VISITING CANBERRA)</b>
<b>AUSTRALIANS LIVING WITH OSTEOPOROSIS</b>	
<b>Elaine, 61</b>	Consumer advocate, GP practice manager, mum & grandmother living with severe osteoporosis, <b>MELBOURNE (VISITING CANBERRA)</b>
<b>Carole, 71</b>	Retired business consultant who has sustained multiple bone fractures & loss of height, Glenning Valley, <b>CENTRAL COAST, NSW (VISITING CANBERRA)</b>
<b>Susanne, 71, OAM</b>	Writer & children's book author diagnosed with osteoporosis after multiple fractures, <b>SYDNEY</b>
<b>Kristy, 34</b>	Assistant brand manager, health coach, & women's health advocate diagnosed with osteopenia in her late 20's, <b>SYDNEY</b>
<b>Marilyn, 70</b>	Graphic designer & classic car enthusiast diagnosed with osteoporosis after falling & fracturing her arm, <b>SYDNEY</b>
<b>Kimberley, 45</b>	Wife & mother-to-two who was diagnosed with pregnancy-related osteoporosis following the birth of her second child, <b>BRISBANE</b>
<b>Jodie, 54</b>	Volunteer, health advocate & mother-of-two who overcame steroid treatment-induced osteoporosis, <b>TOOWOOMBA</b>
<b>DIGITAL MEDIA KIT</b>	<a href="http://www.healthybonesmediakit.com.au">www.healthybonesmediakit.com.au</a>
<b>BROADCAST VISION</b>	<a href="http://www.healthybonesmediakit.com.au/vnr">www.healthybonesmediakit.com.au/vnr</a>
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