



AUSTRALIAN
THYROID
FOUNDATION

PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION
2024-25



Supporting and educating the general public on the importance of Good Thyroid Health for over 28 years

Background to The Australian Thyroid Foundation

The Australian Thyroid Foundation Ltd (known as “ATF”) was first established in 1995 by Founder, Gail Ballantyne and her first committee, along with Gail’s treating specialist, Professor Steven Boyages. Their passion and commitment to set up a national thyroid patient support organisation with strong foundations has enabled it to continue onto today – 28 years later.

The ATF was part of the National Iodine Nutrient Study (NINS) which had its first meeting in Hobart in 2002. The ATF travelled to many parts of Australia with the NINS researchers, helping to test 8-10 year old school children for iodine deficiency and thyroid disorders. The study completed in 2006 showing Australian children were mild to moderately iodine deficient.

The Food Standards of Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) were presented with the NINS research, which resulted in changes that all Australian and New Zealand commercial bread making and baked goods, must include iodised salt. The Australian Federal Government Cabinet were presented with the findings, which resulted in the National Health Medical Research Committee (NHMRC) signing off on a public health policy in January 2010, recommending all women contemplating pregnancy, pregnant or breastfeeding should include a daily supplement including 150mcgs of iodine to prevent iodine deficiency and to protect the development of the newborn and the pregnancy. The ATF support the findings with continued awareness campaigns.

Today, as a Not-For-Profit health charity, The Australian Thyroid Foundation Ltd (ATF) mission is to offer information, education, advocacy and support to members and their families, using services provided by ATF and raise much needed awareness throughout Australia about the consequences of thyroid disease and iodine deficiency and the benefits of achieving good thyroid health.

The ATF is respected by national and international thyroid medical associations as the Australian thyroid patient authority. The ATF is a member of Thyroid Federation International (TFI), a world-wide thyroid patient organisation dedicated to global action of thyroid related issues. The ATF is also a proud honorary patient member of the Endocrine Society of Australia (ESA) and the Asia Oceania Thyroid Association (AOTA).

The organisation is governed by an Executive Committee all of which are volunteers. By bringing their energy and dedication to the organisation, we can continue to provide the same important services that were part of the initial goal of the ATF.

The ATF is honoured and privileged to have Professor Creswell Eastman AM as Principal Medical Advisor along with Chief Medical Advisor’s Professor Bruce Robinson AC, Professor Leigh Delbridge, Associate Professor Julie Miller, Professor Duncan Topliss, Professor Jack Wall, Pharmacist - Dr Geraldine Moses and Dietitian and Nutritionist - Susie Burrell.

*Australian Thyroid Foundation Limited is registered as a charity
by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission*

<https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities/5b017c82-38af-e811-a963-000d3ad24077/profile>



AUSTRALIAN
THYROID
FOUNDATION

PAST CAMPAIGNS
PRIMARILY ON ATF WEBSITE

TEST YOUR THYROID

Diagnosis of a thyroid disorder relies on thorough testing. Knowing which tests are available and how to interpret them will help you to discuss with your doctor what's right for you.

Be Thyroid Aware and Test Your Thyroid
Over 1 million Australian have an undiagnosed thyroid disorder.

THE AUSTRALIAN THYROID FOUNDATION LTD

MOTHER'S DAY

Thyroid & Pregnancy

What does that mean to you and your baby?

Get Smart. Protect your baby's brain.

THE AUSTRALIAN THYROID FOUNDATION LTD

Did you know? Up to 90% of pregnant women are unaware of the importance of thyroid testing. Thyroid disease is a leading cause of brain malformation and learning difficulties.

The Australian Thyroid Foundation also recommends monthly testing to ensure you are healthy and your baby's health is protected.

Support your baby's health and speak to your GP or endocrinologist about thyroid testing. For more information, visit www.thyroidfoundation.com.au

May is **THYROID AWARENESS MONTH**

THE AUSTRALIAN THYROID FOUNDATION LTD

Before you think about planning a family, how is your thyroid health?

MILD & SUBCLINICAL HYPOTHYROIDISM **PRE-ECLAMPSIA** **RHABDOMYOMA** **DOING SUPPLEMENTATION**

To avoid any risk to your pregnancy and your gestational health, please ask your GP and Obstetrician to order relevant thyroid pathology tests before you conceive and once your pregnancy has been confirmed.

Blood test results may vary from one laboratory to another so try and stick with the same accredited laboratory for all testing.

Ongoing monitoring during pregnancy and treatment should not be overlooked if needed.

For more information, please visit: www.thyroidfoundation.com.au

MAY 25TH

WORLD THYROID DAY

THE AUSTRALIAN THYROID FOUNDATION LTD

Thyroid and Communication

World Thyroid Day (WTD), May 25, is dedicated to thyroid patients and all who are committed to the study and treatment of thyroid disease worldwide.

This year 2023, Thyroid and Communication is this year's key message.

It is so important for all thyroid patients to understand their thyroid disorder, and for doctors to understand how thyroid disorders affect patients and how to improve outcomes for patients.

For more information, please visit: www.thyroidfoundation.org.au

It's Not You
It's Your Thyroid!

Learn About the Importance of Recognising Thyroid Symptoms, Thyroid Testing & Available Treatments

This May, make sure you are informed about:

- Recognising Thyroid Symptoms
- Available Thyroid Tests and Treatments
- Reasons to Be Aware of a Hypothyroidism, Hyperthyroidism, undiagnosed or subtle thyroid, contemplating pregnancy, pregnant or breastfeeding

THE AUSTRALIAN THYROID FOUNDATION LTD

Support the ATF and Raise Awareness about the Importance of Good Thyroid Health. To learn more, visit www.thyroidfoundation.org.au

The Australian Thyroid Foundation Ltd

Thyroid Awareness Week

1st – 7th June 2014

Thyroid Disease and Women of Menopausal Age!
Women of menopausal age need to know symptoms they are experiencing may be due to thyroid disease!

- Unexplained Weight Gain
- Depression/Anxiety
- Tiredness and Lethargy
- Dry Hair and Skin
- Sluggish Metabolism

If you are experiencing these or other thyroid symptoms, ask your doctor to test your Thyroid Function, Thyroid Antibodies and Order a Thyroid Ultrasound!

Thyroid Disorders Affect "One In Seven Australians – And Five of The Seven Are Women!"

For more information, visit: www.thyroidfoundation.com.au

Current awareness strategies for thyroid conditions



In recent years ATF has launched campaigns aimed at reaching a number of patient types requiring treatment for the thyroid gland and thyroid hormone production. These have created some level of awareness within the public and health care professionals (HCPs).

The campaigns have been a combination of website content, social media content and where funding permitted, through video content. 2 dates are in each year's awareness campaigns; Thyroid Awareness Month (May) and Gold Bow Day (September).

Funding for these campaigns has primarily come from ATF membership fees, donations and merchandise sales.

Keeping membership affordable for the public, has limited the effectiveness of the message reach due to the piecemeal nature of the content and wider national distribution.

The imperative to seek funding from Federal Government is to counter increasing misinformation on social media creating dietary deficiencies such as an increasing number of young women, who are planning pregnancy or already pregnant opting for plant based milks such as almond, soy or oat milk coffee as an alternative to standard cow's milk, which is a source of iodine and alternate milks do not include.

Australia has been labelled by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as being iodine deficient, and evidenced in research in 2005-06 by Westmead Hospital and Sydney University¹.

The World Health Organisation states iodine deficiency during pregnancy and early infancy –the first 1000 days of life when development of the human brain is so critical – is the commonest global cause of preventable intellectual disability².

1. Evidence for iodine deficiency in the Australian population was derived from a national study on Australian schoolchildren in 2003-2004 in which the ATF actively participated with a large group of Australian clinical researchers. The outcome was the implementation of the mandatory iodine fortification of all salt used in the baking of bread and bread products in Australia and New Zealand.
2. Multiple studies undertaken on pregnant women have revealed that iodine intake in at least 50% of pregnancies in Australia is deficient, despite the addition of iodised salt to bread, putting the next generation of Australian children at risk of neuro-developmental disorders and lower IQ.

THE THYROID GLAND

What is the Thyroid Gland?

The Thyroid Gland is a soft, small bow-shaped gland, located in the front of the neck, below the voice box or larynx (Adam's Apple) on either side of the trachea (windpipe).

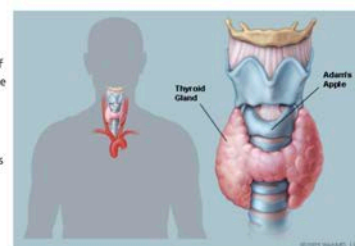
The Role of the Thyroid Gland

The healthy Thyroid Gland uses ingested iodine from iodine enriched foods to produce thyroid hormone which regulates body and brain growth and development, body temperature, energy levels and metabolic functions. (the rate at which the body produces and uses energy from nutrients and oxygen). Thyroid hormones influence and regulate the activity of all cells and tissues in the body.

The thyroid gland is part of the endocrine system and produces the hormones thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). The Thyroid Gland is controlled by the hypothalamus and pituitary gland at the base of the brain.

TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone), which is secreted by the pituitary gland, travels through the blood to stimulate the production of thyroxine (T4) and to a lesser extent small amounts of triiodothyronine (T3) from the thyroid gland. T4 is essentially a prohormone that gets converted into the tissues in the body that need thyroid hormone for normal function.

T4 (thyroxine) controls your metabolism. If there is not enough T4, your body will slow and become hypothyroid. If you have too much T4, your body will speed up and become hyperthyroid.



Pregnancy preparation and the mother's thyroid health during pregnancy is something that is extremely important for all families. The ATF want to ensure the best outcomes for both mothers and babies are possible through awareness and education and ensure future generations of Australians reach the potential they were intended.

In Senior Australians guidance is required to support iodine nutrient enriched meals, and addressing false misnomers such as Himalayan salt, un-iodised crude, pink crystalline having superior nutrient outcomes. Typically the engagement strategy for this demographic is not solely social media and additional channels (such as radio, TV, print) need to deliver the message to at risk Australian seniors. Due to economics and many other issues, the priority for the elderly to ensure their diet is adequate in nutrition can be overlooked in their dietary choices which can impact their health significantly.

In 2021, ATF released analysis to show, well over 1 million Australian are living with an undiagnosed thyroid disorder, including thyroid cancer, lower IQs, lifelong disability, and a causal or possible contributory factor – in the development of other neurological disorders such as ADHD and autism. Some of the challenges for diagnosis and treatment can be addressed by producing material for health care practitioners during patient presentations.

Thyroid Disorders affect all Australians of all age groups and demographics. Awareness is the key to ensuring the public and healthcare professionals do not overlook a thyroid disorder which could be affecting health and wellbeing.

- 1 in 10 Australians will be affected by some form of thyroid disorder
- 7 of the 10 are women
- Over 1 million Australians are undiagnosed
- 60,000 Australians are diagnosed each year
- Thyroid Cancer is increasing, affecting younger Australians
- Iodine Deficiency & Thyroid Disorders affect pregnancy outcomes for women of childbearing years.

“The diagnosis of thyroid disease is frequently not made early on in an affected individual because the symptoms are mostly non-specific without obvious accompanying clinical signs such as heart arrhythmias, impaired intellectual performance, weight loss/gain, fatigue, and skin and hair changes.

Early biochemical testing of thyroid function is essential to making a diagnosis. When all newborn babies and pregnant women are screened for thyroid disorders, they can be treated and reversed in most cases.

We need to improve awareness about underlying thyroid disorders in the community at large, and with our health care professionals in particular, for early thyroid testing to diagnose these disorders before irreparable damage occurs to an individual's health.”

Professor Creswell Eastman AO
Endocrinologist & Principal Medical Advisor
The Australian Thyroid Foundation

Pre-budget 2024-25 Australia Thyroid Foundation funding request

'Recent statistics show well over 1 million Australians are living with an undiagnosed thyroid disorder, awareness and testing can prevent unwarranted outcomes for mothers and their babies' says ATF CEO Beverley Garside OAM

3 initiatives would start to directly address this analysis, with media collateral produced and available over a 2 year period. The content in the campaigns would have new distribution weighting to public and health care professionals viewing channels, rather than primarily viewable on the ATF website.

1. Broad media campaign aimed at young families moving away from standard dietary choices and awareness about the importance of iodine and thyroid health. A national campaign would cost more and would be considered in Year 3 using the produced media assets
2. Produce health education tool kits for health care professionals, to use during patient presentations
3. Cookbook for Senior Australians, containing easy to understand recipes with an iodine slant to improve health outcomes, with healthy living choices.

The funding requests to support these initiatives would be:

	Production costs	Distribution/ publicity costs	Total
Broad campaign for young families - Print - Digital/social media - Video	\$25,000	\$75,000	\$100,000
Educational tool kits for health care professionals - Print - Digital/social media - Video	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$50,000
Cookbook for Senior Australians - Written by subject matter expert or notable identity - Artwork - Editorial - Printing (100 copies to start) and distribution	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$75,000
			\$225,000

References

- Factsheet: Iodine is important for the normal development of a baby's brain and nervous system, **NSW Health**
- Why I worry for dairy-deprived mums and kids, **Opinion by Professor Creswell Eastman, Sydney Morning Herald 8th January 2023**
- "Iodine is an essential nutrient that humans need in very small quantities. A small gland in the neck, known as the thyroid, uses iodine to produce thyroid hormones.¹ These hormones are vital to ensure normal development of the brain and nervous system before birth, in babies and young children.^{2,3} For this reason, it is very important that pregnant and breastfeeding women get enough iodine", **NHMRC's Public Statement "Iodine Supplementation for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women January 2010**
- A daily supplement that includes 150 micrograms of iodine is recommended for women when planning pregnancy, during pregnancy and while breastfeeding.*, **NSW Health Factsheet**
- 'TEST YOUR THYROID', **ATF media release May 2021**
- 'BEFORE YOU PLAN A FAMILY, HOW IS YOUR THYROID HEALTH?', **ATF media release May 2022**
- Consequences and risks of an inadequate amount of thyroid hormone at conception, during pregnancy and whilst breastfeeding. "Association between maternal thyroid function and risk of gestational hypertension and pre-eclampsia: a systematic review and individual-participant data meta-analysis" & "From preeclampsia to thyroid dysfunction: a long and winding road", **The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology Vol. 10 No. 4, March 2022**

Contact

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