MS PLUS
Neuro Wellbeing

ACT Newsletter
September 2024

Our Values - *Empowerment, Community, Expertise, Creativity and Spirited*

The 2024 MS Gong Ride is Almost Here!

Get Ready to Ride: The much-anticipated 2024 MS Gong Ride is set to roll out on **Sunday 3 November,** and it's gearing up to be an epic day of cycling, community spirit, and charitable fun!

Get Involved: Registration is open, and spots are filling up fast! So, don't wait—sign up now to secure your place in this exhilarating event. Plus, check out the official MS Gong Ride website for tips on training, fundraising ideas, and event details.

Don't Miss Out! The MS Gong Ride is more than just a ride; it's a chance to be part of something bigger, to challenge yourself, and to help a fantastic cause. So, dust off your bike, start your training, and get ready to roll.

For more details and to register, visit the official MS Gong Ride website https://www.msgongride.org.au/

**** **See you at the starting line!** ****

MS GONG RIDE

Applications close soon!!

MS Go for Gold Scholarships provide one-off grants to follow a personal dream.

If you're living with multiple sclerosis and need support to help achieve your dream, an MS Go for Gold Scholarship can help.

There are 25 scholarships available this year, valued up to $2,000 each with categories including:

- personal expression
- education
- living your best life

Submit your application here

APPLICATIONS FOR 2024 ARE NOW OPEN!

Applications will close at **5pm Tuesday 17 September**

THANK-YOU!!!

The MS Plus Events Team were in Canberra recently to deliver the Canberra MS Mega Swim! The 24-hour swimming relay held at the Australian Institute of Sport raised over $45,000 and saw over 140 swimmers take to the pool in support of people living with MS. Our highest fundraiser for the event was Lea Edwards from the 'Grumpy Bears' team. Lea raised funds by selling homemade chocolates and eclipsed her initial fundraising target of $150, eventually raising over $2,000! Congratulations Lea and congratulations to all our fabulous participants!

MSMEGA CHALLENGE

All monies raised goes directly to the MS Go For Gold Scholarships, awarded to people living with MS to chase a personal dream. In the last 20 years, we have funded over 900 MS Go For Gold Scholarships to fulfil the dream of someone living with multiple sclerosis.

Need to improve your understanding of MS?

Understanding MS is an award-winning online course that aims to improve understanding and awareness of MS. Nearly 50,000 people from 170+ countries have enrolled in this free course to date!

Course opens: **9 September 2024**

Course duration: 6 weeks

Estimated effort: 2 hours per week

Cost: FREE

Enrol today

'I know sometimes the idea of working full time can seem pretty tough if you have a chronic condition'

Brad had been feeling unwell for many years before being diagnosed with MS in 2020. After leaving his job in international trade in July that year, Brad went to an optometrist for a standard eye test. The optometrist flagged they may need to do some further investigation.

Brad reached out to MS Plus early on. He was given information about the **free Employment Support Service** (ESS) and put in touch with Employment Development Manager, Chris, who helped Brad to find a new role.

He also works with an Occupational Therapist to help manage his symptoms and make sure they don't impact his performance at work.

Click here to read Brad's story >

A grandson's legacy: honouring his grandmother and battling MS in her memory

A century ago, my grandmother Alice fell ill. She was a young mother living in Berlin when the doctor diagnosed her with multiple sclerosis (MS). In the 1920s, treatments for MS were scarce. By 1924, after four years of struggle, Alice succumbed to her illness. She was only 33 and left behind her family. My father was 13. It would have been hard.

I'm sad that I never knew my grandmother. It's one reason I'm leaving a gift in my Will to MS Plus. I want a cure found so other people and their families won't suffer.

Fourteen years after Alice died, my parents fled Nazi Germany. After a fraught journey, they arrived in Australia. My father established a successful drapery and Persian rug shop near Sydney's CBD. When I sit in a favourite coffee shop at Edgecliff's East Point Centre, I know I'm close to where his store once was. My mother was a talented hatmaker who worked for a well-known milliner for many years

My parents came from humble beginnings and worked long hours to provide for us. Their work ethic strongly influenced me. Even though I'm past retirement age, I still work long hours. I often get up at 2:00 am to work with clients in the United States.

I've been in real estate and property development for over 60 years. Now 80, I still advise a few select American and Australian clients. Working longer allows me to keep supporting charity.

Besides being hard workers, my parents were philanthropic. Helping the community has always been important to our family. I've taken an interest in causes that affected us: breast cancer, vision impairment and MS. I enjoy giving while I'm alive so I can see the impact.

With MS, it's not only about Alice. Three friends also developed the disease. One of them was in the same nursing home as my 93-year-old father. They passed away within a few weeks of each other. It was heartbreaking, as she was so young to be in a nursing home

In 2009, I began donating to MS Plus to support people with the disease. **I started with annual donations and recently added a gift to my Will. That way I can continue helping after I'm gone.**

Some people prefer to direct their gifts to specific projects**. I'm happy to let MS Plus decide where it's needed most. I've talked to friends about my decision and encouraged them to donate to charity. I tell them that my choice makes me feel good.** Not everyone wants to support charities, and that's okay. But several friends have said that after talking to me, they will leave a gift in their Will to charity.

Years ago, I decided to help MS Plus to honour my grandmother and friends. I want more people to be aware of MS. If people understood what patients go through, they might appreciate the importance of supporting this most worthy charity.

Ron

Could you be like Ron and work to protect future generations from MS? A gift in your Will could help fund research, better treatments or more services. Become a member of the MS Callistemon League. To learn more, contact Laura at the MS Plus Future Planning Team. Call 1800 443 867, email futureplanning@msplus.org.au or visit www.mymslegacy.org.au

Volunteer Visitors

We can help end loneliness for an older person in your community

Do you know someone in aged care or at living at home with a home care package who is at risk of social isolation or loneliness. MS Plus proudly delivers the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme, funded by the Australian Government. We have volunteer visitors in ACT ready to visit and bring a smile and some conversation over a cup of tea to someone in your community. If you know someone who may benefit from a visitor contact us directly at ACVVSAdmin@msplus.org.au, or submit a referral yourself to msplus.org.au/aboutACVVS

MS PLUS
Neuro Wellbeing

what's on

Exploring the latest programs and updates from client engagement and wellbeing

SEPTEMBER 2024

Upcoming programs

Managing Menopause: Practical Lifestyle Advice

In recognition of Women's Health Week, join us for a **FREE** daytime session featuring insights from our expert MS allied health professionals:

- **Julie Orr**, MS Plus Dietitian, will present a pre-recorded session on how diet impacts menopause and offer practical tips for managing this significant phase of life.
- **Talita Welmans**, MS Plus Exercise Physiologist, will deliver a live presentation on the benefits of exercise during menopause and will be available to answer your questions.

This lunchtime session is designed to empower you with knowledge and strategies to better navigate menopause while managing MS. Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable insights and boost your confidence in managing these aspects of your health.

Date: Tuesday 3rd September 2024
Time: 12:00pm-12:40pm
Location: Online **Book here!**

NDIS Upskill: a guide to understanding eligibility and access

Navigating the NDIS can be a complex process. Understanding eligibility criteria and determining the most effective way to initiate access can be challenging. Join us for NDIS Upskill: A guide to understanding eligibility and access a free 40 minute online session to guide you through the new NDIS access process and eligibility information.

Date: Thursday 17 October 2024, with more dates added
Time: 12:00pm AEST
Cost: Free **Book here!**

Navigate MS: Living well with a new diagnosis of MS

With the right information, tools and strategies you can live well with a diagnosis of MS. Specifically tailored for people newly diagnosed, we'll cover topics such as: Understanding MS, health strategies, navigating the health system, building resilience and accessing support. This four-week program is designed to build knowledge and empower, allowing time to share experiences and ask questions.

The program runs for four weeks, and evening and day programs run throughout the year. To register contact Plus Connect on 1800 042 138 or connect@msplus.org.au

Get the latest

- Watch on demand webinars and podcasts, and read the transcripts on the **Resource Hub**
- Want to know more about our dietician service, employment support service or just want more information? Get in touch with Plus Connect on 1800 042 138 or **connect@msplus.org.au**

what's on ...

Information for people supporting someone with MS

The *Plus Navigate: Friends & Family* program is for people who support someone with MS.

Over two 75-minute sessions, an MS expert will guide discussions, provide information, links to resources and answer any questions.

We'll cover a range of topics including:

* understanding MS
* where to access help and support
* navigating the health system
* how to take care of yourself

To learn more or register, click here

Young Carers: Navigating Responsibilities and Wellbeing

Young carers play a significant role in our society, often shouldering responsibilities beyond their years. Each young carer has unique circumstances and responsibilities. Clinical Psychologist, Nicola Palfrey from headspace National talks about the world of young carers, their challenges, and the importance of looking after themselves to manage their daily life.

Watch here

Carers, Family & Friends Toolkit

This online resource provides a range of information and practical tips specifically designed for people who are supporting someone with MS. Topics include:

Understanding MS for Carers
Understanding emotions
Parents of teens with MS
Looking after yourself
Talking about MS
Navigating support systems
Finances, legal & work
Young Carers
Preparing for emergencies

Explore the toolkit here

Peer Links: learning through shared experience

Connecting with peers in a similar situation is a wonderful opportunity to share experiences and learn from each other. Our facilitated four-week Peer Links create a safe space for you to share, support and learn. Guest speakers will join throughout the program to share tips and strategies on topics such as managing MS symptoms, brain health activities, stress management and emotional wellbeing. We have two upcoming programs:

- Peer Link *Taking Control*
- Peer Link *Working & Living with MS*

To register book here

Exercise Classes at Gloria McKerrow House

Be Better Balanced

A combination of chair and circuit-based exercises designed for individuals who can still walk but have challenges with balance, stamina, and overall mobility. Classes are comprehensive and well-paced, ensuring they are enjoyable for everyone.

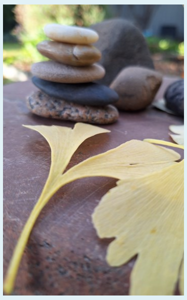
When: Tuesdays 9.30am — 10.30am
Thursdays 10.00am – 11.00am (online available)

Wheels in Motion

A class designed for people in wheelchairs or who are having difficulty walking. In this class the focus is on upper body mobility as well as making use of a motorised exercise bike for those it suits. This is a small group and where possible individual work is done on each person to mobilise leg movement.

When: Thursdays 11.00am – 12.00pm **Cost:** $10.00 per class or 10 classes for $90.00

Please call 1800 042 138 to register



Online Mindfulness Meditation

…for people with Multiple Sclerosis and other neurological conditions.

Join us every Friday afternoon, from 3:30pm - 4:30pm and experience the relaxing benefits of meditation.

Email Helen Woodbridge (woodbridgehelen@hotmail.com) and she'll send you a Zoom link for the session every Friday. Carers and family also welcome!

Peer Support

We have two Peer Support Groups available in the ACT, and new members are welcome at any time.

People with MS (PwMS) Taking Control Group

Our group meets twice a month and seeks to connect people living with MS in the Canberra region, for friendship and information sharing, with a focus on living well with MS.

Meets:1. 12.30 to 2.00pm - 2nd Friday, *13 September 2024* **Venue:** Zoom only
2. 12.30 to 2.00pm - Last Friday, *27 September 2024* **Venue:** Gloria McKerrow House, Deakin

Contact Vanessa Fanning/Mary Webb at pwmstcg@gmail.com to be added to our email list, and/or join our Facebook group 'Canberra Region MSers'. In line with privacy principles, you can unsubscribe at any time.

ACT Weekend MS Peer Support Group

Meets: 10am, 3rd Saturday of each month **Venue:** ACT Café, Canberra
Contact Plus Connect on 1800 042 138

Vacancies on the ACT MS Community Engagement Council

The ACT MS Community Engagement Council currently has four vacancies to fill and would welcome any expressions of interest from individuals that might like to join the Council. Meetings of the Council occur bi-monthly either in person at Gloria McKerrow House or via zoom attendance at 5.30pm on a Wednesday evening.

The Engagement Council represents the local voice and views regarding the collective needs and concerns of people affected by multiple sclerosis (*people diagnosed with* multiple sclerosis, *their families and carers and others in the community who support or are supported by people diagnosed with* multiple sclerosis).

Any expressions of interest or questions can be emailed to Advisory.Council@msplus.org.au and they will be forwarded to the Council Chair.