



PLUS
Neuro Wellbeing

ACT Newsletter
February 2025

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

Meet Iain – One of 2024’s Go for Gold Scholarship Winners



ACT local, Iain was awarded an MS Go for Gold Scholarship in 2024, which provided him with the rare opportunity to reunite with his sister, Isabel, after over six years.

This trip has previously been impossible for Iain and his family. In 2015, Iain was diagnosed with Relapsing-Remitting MS (RRMS). His symptoms of chronic fatigue, balance issues, and nerve/muscle pain has greatly affected his daily life.

But Iain is not the only person in his family living with MS. His older sister Isabel was diagnosed with Primary Progressive MS (PPMS) over 20 years ago. Iain and Isabel live in different states, and since having two daughters, Iain has begun to feel the distance not only physically, but emotionally as well.

“I miss my sister so much. I know she wants nothing more than to spend time with my girls. The memories we’ll create

during this trip will be priceless.”

The Go for Gold Scholarship helps people living with MS achieve their dreams, in Iain’s case, reuniting his family. Read all 2024 winners’ stories or express your interest in applying for the 2025 scholarship here on the [MS Plus website](#).

We can help you manage your fatigue

Register for FACETS

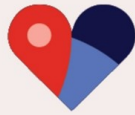
Working with a chronic condition
Tips to help you find work

Suitable for all people with a neurological condition

Thursday 25th February
12.30 - 1.30pm
Free live online program

what's on

Exploring the latest programs and updates from client engagement and wellbeing



February 2025

Getting started with NDIS?

We can help

Applying for NDIS can be an overwhelming experience and the recent changes to the scheme may have left you scratching your head!

We're here to help you on your NDIS journey, starting with the application! Join our free NDIS Upskill lunchtime session to learn more about the NDIS, eligibility and process to help demystify the process.

When: Next session is 11 February 2025
12:00pm – 12:40pm

Register: <https://www.trybooking.com/CUANY>

Cost: Free

Working with a chronic condition

The benefits of employment reach far beyond just financial, however navigating work with a chronic condition can bring its own challenges.



**Working with a chronic condition
Tips to help you stay employed**

Suitable for all people with a neurological condition
Tuesday 18th February 6:00 to 7:30pm
Free live online program

Whether you're trying to stay employed or find work, join our employment experts to learn strategies for maintaining your career, or rejoining the workforce, while managing your condition.

Free programs. Register now

Working with a chronic condition: Tips to stay employed

Tuesday 18 February – 6:00 - 7:30pm

<https://www.trybooking.com/CXJSO>

Working with a chronic condition: Finding work

Thursday 25 February – 12.30 - 1.30pm

<https://www.trybooking.com/CXJTV>

Managing Fatigue

We can help you manage your fatigue

Register for FACETS



Fatigue is a very common symptom of MS and can significantly impact your work, but there are strategies you can learn to help.

FACETS (Fatigue: Applying Cognitive behavioural and

Energy Effectiveness Techniques to LifeStyle) is an evidence-based program designed for people living with MS to help manage fatigue using 'energy effectiveness' techniques and cognitive behavioural therapy strategies.

Developed by researchers from Bournemouth University and Poole Hospital in the UK, the group program is delivered by trained professionals with no more than 12 participants. The 2 programs involves weekly 90min sessions over 6 weeks.

FACETS for work – Lunchtime session

25 February 2025, 12:00pm - 1:30pm

FACETS – Evening session

Starting 11 March 2025, 6:30pm - 8:00pm

Learn more: msplus.org.au/FACETS

Register: <https://www.trybooking.com/CUNAE>

Cost: \$150

Peer Talk—Speak with someone who understands

Peer talk is a one-to-one peer support program. Trained peer volunteers who live with MS and understand the challenges you might be facing are available to speak with you. You'll be matched with a peer volunteer who has a specific interest or experience that matches closely to your circumstance.

Peer Talk is available anytime. For some people just one phone chat is enough, for others a few conversations might be better suited.

Book a Peer Talk appointment or learn more:
1800 042 138 | connect@msplus.org.au

Cost: Free

Peer Support Peer Talk

Connect with a peer volunteer one-on-one





Nursing a desire to help the MS community

In 2015, 21-year-old Cass David was working in a Melbourne dental clinic and considering a career in nursing. But then, she began to feel unwell. *"It started with headaches, and then my speech changed. My motor skills deteriorated next. I struggled to play my guitar," she recalls. "The maxillofacial surgeon I worked with at the clinic told me to get an MRI. I did, and soon found out I had MS."* Cass tried to stay positive.



"Negativity and anger drain your energy and push people away. We all face challenges, and I thought, this is mine, but I'll do my best to manage it." Her best meant pursuing her nursing degree and using her experience to help others. While Cass doesn't usually share her diagnosis with patients, she knows that her dual role as a patient and a nurse gives her a unique perspective on pain management and resilience.

In the early stages, Cass's MS was aggressive, leading to frequent hospital stays. But thanks to new medications and self-care measures like a good diet, aerial yoga, massage and osteopathy, her condition improved. In 2021, Cass and her partner moved to Alice Springs for "the adventure of a lifetime."



She became a flight nurse with the Royal Flying Doctors Service, flying thousands of kilometres across Australia to provide urgent care to patients in remote communities. *"You see everything from farm accidents and heart attacks to snakebites," she says.* Cass also works as an emergency care nurse at Alice Springs Hospital.

"I wanted to experience intense nursing now before my condition might limit me. Many people in rural communities have complex health issues, and you encounter conditions here that aren't as common in metropolitan settings. It's been invaluable learning," she explains.

Throughout her MS journey, Cass has received support from MS Plus. The team helped her understand her condition, navigate the NDIS for equipment and connect with others living with MS. Grateful for their assistance, Cass, now 30, has regularly donated to MS Plus. Recently, she took her commitment a step further by leaving a gift to MS Plus in her Will.

"I've received so much help from MS Plus. The research and services they provide wouldn't be possible without funding. My gift can go where it's most needed," she says.

Cass used Gathered Here, free online will-writing service and said it was easy to include a charity. [Gathered Here Online Will](#) "It was straightforward. I'm happy knowing that my contribution will help others in the future." **Cass's journey with MS hasn't been easy, but she remains optimistic.**

"I've come a long way in 10 years. I lug a 25-kilo ventilator every time I get on a plane, but I can do it. I'm fortunate to be in a better place now, but I know not everyone with MS is as lucky. I don't take anything for granted. **I want to live life to the fullest, and I want that for others, too."**

Could you be like Cass? By including a gift of any size in your Will, you can leave a legacy of your own values. This way you can help MS Plus continue its vital work for a cure, better treatments and expanded services for people living with MS. Cass is now a member of the **MS Callistemon League**, a group of extraordinary people who are leaving a legacy of kindness, care, and ultimately – transformation. For more information, contact Laura Henschke at **1800 443 867**, email futureplanning@msplus.org.au or visit www.mymslegacy.org.au

Fast-track a cure for MS, care until we're there. Protect future generation from MS

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)

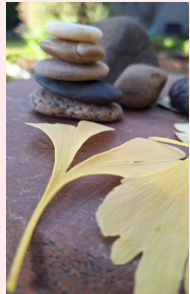
Cost: 10 classes for \$130.00

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 classes for \$130.00

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 Helen will send you a Zoom link for the session every Friday. Carers and family also welcome!

Peer Support in the ACT

We have two Peer Support Groups available 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, 14 February 2025 **Venue:** Zoom Only

2. 12:30 to 2:00pm - Last Friday, 28 February 2025 **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: 10:00am, 3rd Saturday of each month

Venue: ACT Café, Canberra

Contact Plus Connect on 1800 042 138

Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme—We can help end loneliness for an older person in your community

Do you know someone in aged care or 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