



PLUS
Neuro Wellbeing

ACT Region Newsletter
March 2024

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

The MS Walk, Run and Roll is back in Canberra this May!

The moment we've all been waiting for is finally here! Registrations for the highly anticipated [2024 Canberra MS Walk Run + Roll](#) are officially OPEN!

Spread the word to your friends and mark your calendars for **Sunday 5 May** as we come together at Rond Terrace, Acton for an incredible day of walking, running, and rolling in support of Australians living with multiple sclerosis.

Whether you're in a wheelchair, walking, running, or pushing a stroller, we can all move forward united for a common cause.

Sign up solo, with a mate, bring your dog or get the team together. No matter your style, let's move together to support Australians living with this devastating neurological condition.

Together, we can make sure no one faces MS alone.



[REGISTER HERE](#)

EVENT DATE	LOCATION	COURSES	START TIMES
Sunday 5 May 2024	Rond Terrace, Acton	5KM and 10KM VIEW MAP	Walk—10:30am Run—9:00am Roll—10:30am



Plus Diet and Nutrition

**Eat well
live well**



Available via telehealth

[Click here for more information](#)



THE MAY 50K LAUNCHES ON 5 MARCH

The May 50k is back in 2024 and you can leave your limits behind by walking or running 50, 100 or 150 kilometres in May whilst fundraising for life-changing research into multiple sclerosis.

Wherever you live, whatever your fitness level, you can decide when, where and how you will complete your kms.

Make sure to head on over to our website and register your interest to be the first one to know when entries open [HERE](#)

This year you can win some very special prizes just by registering, referring a friend or donating!

“Peer Support makes the MS mountain less high”

When Erin was suddenly diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS), she felt isolated, afraid and traumatised. She was just 25 and had no idea where to turn – until she found out about MS Plus Peer Support. *“It was really powerful to find a judgement-free zone, a truly safe space,”* Erin says.

That sense of connection is made possible by Peer Support volunteers. The number of Australians living with MS has risen rapidly over the past four years and the need for compassionate peer support is greater than ever.

**No-one should
have to face
MS alone.**

Help fund the Plus Peer Support programs
that were lifechanging for Erin.



After being diagnosed, Erin joined her local in-person group, as well as online sessions focused on balancing work with MS. She got so much out of it that she became a volunteer herself. Erin now runs a group for under 30s, as well as providing one-on-one Peer Support by phone. *“I want to create a space for people to ask questions, or just express how they’re feeling. It means so much to know someone’s going to listen and understand. Plus, people’s suggestions can be really useful,”* she says.

Peer Support helped Erin find the confidence her MS diagnosis had taken away. These days, Erin is living well. She works as a legal assistant, and recently started studying law. She wanted to share her story with you to make sure more peer support work becomes possible. *“It’s so, so important,”* she says. *“These options for support make MS a little bit less lonely, make the mountain less high. I think I’d be in a very different place without MS Plus Peer Support.”*

Without donations from kind people like you, we can’t recruit, train, and coordinate wonderful volunteers like Erin, who give so much back to their MS community.

Together we can make sure nobody has to face MS alone.

Donate to Plus Peer Support – so nobody has to face MS alone www.msplusdonate.org.au

what's on

Exploring the latest programs and updates from client engagement and wellbeing



MS Brain Health - what is it and how do I get it? **12 March 2024, 5:30pm – 6:15pm AEDT**

[Register now](#)

Do you want a healthier brain? It seems we all do, but don't exactly know what it means and how to get it. Join us for an enlightening webinar on 12 March in which brain health researcher and Accredited practising dietitian Olivia Wills will talk with Jodi Haartsen, MS nurse, to explore what brain health is and how you can optimize yours.



Olivia is completing a PhD in multiple sclerosis and lifestyle management and is supported by a postgraduate scholarship from MS Australia. At the heart of Olivia's research is her commitment to enhancing the lives of those living with MS. Her research focuses on the impact of adopting protective health behaviours to maximise lifelong brain health.

In this webinar we will also discuss the MS medical approach to brain health, the MS Brain Health Standards and what they mean for you. The MS Brain Health Standards are a global initiative that seeks to ensure consistent practices and standards of medical care for people with MS. So, if you are not sure how often you should have an MRI, neurological examination, or a visit to your neuro, join Olivia and MS Nurse Jodi Haartsen, as they point you to the resources you need to be an empowered partner in your care.



Launched on 13 February is the new podcast series **The MS BOOST**. This will be a fortnightly series filled with concise interviews with expert guests, **it's all the stuff you need to know, from the people who know it.**

In our first episode we delved into medical gaslighting, an issue that affects many people living with MS. In an interview with Rachel Horne, a UK based journalist and person with MS, delving into the hidden subject of medical gaslighting. Rachel shared her lived experience of medical gaslighting, we talked through some of the reasons it happens and importantly what you can do if you feel like this is happening to you.

"It's kind of insidious and it plants a seed that you're not worth listening to or you're not to be trusted or you're to be fobbed off"

Rachel was diagnosed with MS in 2009 and has written for the highly respected Barts MS Blog linked to Queen Mary, University of London. She has also co-authored articles which have been published in The British Medical Journal, Annals of Neurology, Neurology and Nature Reviews Neurology. Rachel is the founder of the Rachel Horne Prize for Women's Research in MS, which aims to support female researchers in the field of multiple sclerosis.

Also in February, we caught up with MS Nurse Louise Rath about a new MS medication that is coming into the MS treatment landscape. Well, it's not quite new, more a variation on the current. Don't miss our discussion with Louise on the nuts and bolts of the **new version of Tysabri.**

The MS Boost will be in addition to our current series, so make sure you're following MS Podcasts on your preferred player like Apple Podcasts or Spotify to be the first to know when the first episode is released.

You can find previously recorded webinars and podcasts on the [Resource Hub](#).

If you need further information or would like to talk to our MS Nurse please reach out to the Plus Connect team.

Volunteer Visitors

Do you know an older person in aged care or who has a home care package who could use some company? MS Plus are proud providers of the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme where we match older people in need of company with volunteer visitors. If you know of someone who may benefit from the program, please contact our ACT program coordinator at ACCVSAdmin@msplus.org.au



Peer Support

We have two Peer Support Groups available in ACT who welcome new members any time. If you're interested in joining a group contact Plus Connect on 1800 042 138.

People with MS Group

Meets: 12.30 to 2.00pm - Last Friday of each month (exc Dec) **Venue:** Gloria McKerrow House, Deakin

ACT Weekend MS Peer Support Group

Meets: 2:00pm on third Saturday of each month **Venue:** ACT Café, Canberra

Peer Links: The MS Peer Links sessions are now available for registration. Keep an eye on your email or InTouch for dates!

Peer Links are held online and are short-term programs facilitated by our peer support coordinators.

Taking place over 4-6 week 90-minute sessions, guest speakers share information on topics to prompt discussion and learning for the group.

If you're new to peer support, have an interest in a particular topic or can't commit to an ongoing group, Peer Links are a great option.

For more information contact **Plus Connect on 1800 042 138.**

Support and information for people newly diagnosed, and for the people that support them.

A new diagnosis of MS can be an overwhelming experience, both to the person diagnosed and their family and friends. We understand that knowledge and connection are important steps in effectively managing MS and living well, so we have two programs specifically developed for those navigating a new diagnosis and for the important people supporting someone with a diagnosis.

Navigate Series: Newly Diagnosed - for people who have received a diagnosis of MS in the past two years. The program runs online over 5 weeks. To book, contact Plus Connect on 1800 042 138.

Navigate Series: Family & Friends – a two-part online program is for the family and friends supporting someone with MS.

To learn more or register visit [Register Here](#)

Carers, Family & Friends

The MS Plus Carers Family & Friends [toolkit](#) is a comprehensive resource specifically for people who support someone with MS. We are regularly updating the tool so keep an eye out of new information.

In an upcoming episode from the **MS Plus Podcast series**, we speak with Linda Rowley about the often-overlooked experience of [ambiguous loss for carers](#). Linda was engaged by MS Plus as a consultant to help develop the MS Plus Carers Strategy, and she has a deep passion for supporting mental health and wellbeing across all different types of arenas. We know many people living with MS and carers are all too familiar with loss, and in this episode, Linda digs deeper into the loss from a family, friends and carers perspective, and provides insight into what is ambiguous loss and how to live your best life while living with loss and grief. **Search 'MS Podcasts' on your preferred player and follow to be notified when the episode is published.**

Carers, Family & Friends Toolkit

These resources answer common questions about providing support for people living with multiple sclerosis, as well as taking care of yourself.

The MS Plus Virtual Art Show is back for 2024!

Get ready for a vibrant showcase at this year's MS Plus Art Show! The MS Plus Virtual Art Show is your chance to express your creativity and celebrate connections through art.

This year's art show theme will be 'It Takes A Village' — a celebration of the people, systems and services that support people with MS.

Show us, what does the village mean to you?

The 2024 MS Plus Art Show will be **open for entries** from **Monday 1 April**, closing **Sunday 5 May**. We can't wait to see your entries! Visit msplus.org.au/artshow



MS Plus Art Show

ZEST: Dance for Wellbeing in 2024 – ticks all the boxes! Thanks Rotary!

Dance is a unique vehicle, combining multiple approaches to movement and exercise, building confidence and an improved quality of life. It ticks all the boxes for health and wellbeing for everyone, regardless of mobility, ability or experience.

Across Canberra **ZEST: Dance for Wellbeing** delivers over 12 regular dance classes for seniors, and commences February 5. They are designed specifically for adults who want to experience the joy of dancing, and keep their body and brain as active and healthy as possible, regardless of their mobility, skill or age. It involves seated and standing options throughout.

With thanks to the Rotary Club of Ginninderra, our newest class takes place at The Ginninderra Labor Club, 40 Lhotsky St, Charnwood, commencing Thursday 8 February at 1.30, with refreshments afterwards.

People from the MS Community are especially welcome to come and try a class, at any of our locations across the ACT.

Research increasingly validates the unique role that dance provides, in integrating exercise for the body and the brain, all within a supportive social environment. Come and give it a go!



Photo: Paul Chapman, MODE imagery

Further information/enquiries: <https://zestdwb.blogspot.com>;

0417 417 182 or email ZestDWB@gmail.com



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Support Service

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ACT appointments
available

Get in touch today




[More Info](#)

Ensure your NDIS plan meets your goals for your MS care.

Our experienced support coordinators can help you make sense of your NDIS plan and connect with the services you need.



Get in touch today 

[Click here for more info](#)

Friday Afternoon Online Meditation



Join us online every Friday afternoon from 3:30pm for an hour of easy Mindfulness Meditation. It's an opportunity to meet other people with MS in a relaxed way. Anyone with MS or other neurological disorders or their family, friends and carers, are welcome to join us online each week for a guided meditation. Mindfulness Meditation can help us to process the events of the week, reducing stress, and helping with our wellbeing. Anyone interested, please email Helen at woodbridgehelen@hotmail.com.

People with MS (PwMS) Taking Control Group

Our group seeks to connect people living with MS in the Canberra region, for friendship and information sharing, with a focus on living well with MS. We host regular meetings twice a month—the second and last Friday of each month. The first one is on Zoom and this is a good opportunity to chat and catch up with each other without leaving home.

March meetings:

- Friday 8 March 12:30pm, Zoom only
- Friday 29 March 12:30pm, Gloria McKerrow House, 117 Denison Street, 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'.

If you would like to get timely updates on our Zoom meetings, presentations, and share news, information and feedback with us, please let us know. As many people with MS do not necessarily wish to disclose their diagnosis, the names and email addresses of people who subscribe to our mailing list are strictly confidential and not visible to any other recipients. In line with privacy principles, you can unsubscribe at any time.