



**PLUS**  
Neuro Wellbeing

**ACT Newsletter**  
May 2024

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

## The 2024 MS Plus Virtual Art Show



**MS Plus  
Art Show**

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 closing Sunday 5 May. We can't wait to see your entries! Visit [msplus.org.au/artshow](https://msplus.org.au/artshow)**

## JOIN THE MAY 50K TO LEAVE MS WHERE IT BELONGS, BEHIND US...



This May, smash your fitness goals as you help raise funds to support life-changing research into the prevention, treatment and finding a cure for multiple sclerosis.

Challenge yourself to move **50 KM (The OG)**, **100 KM (Double Up)** or **150 KM (Triple Threat)**, in your own time and at your own pace.

Take part on your own, as a team, or get your whole workplace involved!

We'll be here to support and encourage you every step of the way, as we come together to leave MS where it belongs, behind us.

**[REGISTER FOR FREE HERE](#)**

# MS WALK RUN+ROLL



Register,  
donate or  
volunteer  
today



## Sun 5 May 2024 Rond Terrace

Acton ACT 2601

Walk Run + Roll your way to  
ensure no one faces MS  
alone

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Visit [mswalk.org.au](http://mswalk.org.au) to find out more.  
E [events@ms.org.au](mailto:events@ms.org.au) T 1300 733 690

# WORLD MS DAY 2024

## 'It Takes a Village' this World MS Day

This World MS Day (WMSD) we are exploring the theme 'My MS Diagnosis' and the idea that 'It Takes a Village' to support someone diagnosed with a chronic condition — in those early days after diagnosis and beyond. We understand the importance of nurturing and developing those support networks, to ensure everyone has a chance to live well with MS.

## Canberra MS Community and Education Day

Date: **Saturday, 15 June 2024**

Time: **11am - 2.45pm\***

Location: **Tuggeranong Arts Centre, 137 Reed Street, Greenway, ACT**

Join the Canberra MS Community for a social day of creativity, learning and inspiration! There is a session for the newly diagnosed, creative workshops to explore the spark within and a workshop on what tools we can draw upon for our health journey. Try something new and sign up for the FREE sessions or drop in and join us for a cuppa or lunch.

- Newly diagnosed and MS supports session by MS Plus
- Meet community peers from Canberra various MS networks.
- Dance workshop
- Journal writing workshop
- Art workshop
- Board games & Book club

\* **Bookings essential due to venue.** Feel free to drop in for a cuppa between 11am – 2pm.

For FREE registration and inquiries, please click on this link <https://www.trybooking.com/CRAUG> and simply tell us which session/s you would like to be signed up for.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to thrive, learn, and connect. We can't wait to see you there!

Follow the socials on FB [@CanberraRegionMSers](#) for updates.

11.00am - 12.30pm	Art	Try something new and explore your creativity through the medium of art guided by a local talented artist. All materials provided.
11.00am – 2.00pm	Boardgame/Book Club drop in	Canberra Monopoly anyone? A regular board games and book club weekend catch up group welcome you to enjoy a range of boardgames and books with them.
11.15am – 2.15pm	Newly diagnosed and accessing MS Support	An MS diagnoses can be overwhelming and it can be hard to know where to start. Connect with others and learn about the supports available through MS Plus and the Canberra community.
12:15pm– 1.00pm	Lunch	Drop in, say hello! Enjoy a cuppa and a bite to eat and meet the Canberra MS support groups.
12:45pm – 2.00pm	Nature Journaling	Nature journaling with Dr Fiona Boxall is a mindful observation of the natural world around us by taking the time to record personal memories and experiences through sketching. All materials are provided. You are welcome to bring your own sketch pad.
1.00pm – 1.45pm	Dance for Wellbeing	Discover the joy of dance as an expression of self through movement in a seated environment with option to travel. No dance experience necessary.
2.00pm – 4.00pm	Living Well Toolkit Workshop	Canberra based Elle Pendrick, founder of 'Adulging Well', is committed to empowering and educating people to navigate life with a chronic illness and thrive. In this workshop, Elle shares a toolkit she has developed from her lifelong journey with CHD to help others to gain skills, resilience and mindset.

# what's on

Exploring the latest programs and updates from client engagement and wellbeing



This year, on May 31, World MS Day, the focus is on raising awareness about the diagnosis. Unfortunately, we hear stories daily of people experiencing delays in diagnosis and surplus suffering accumulated from these delays. To support those concerned they may have MS, we're hosting a webinar offering practical guidance on what steps to take if you suspect you have MS. The webinar content will remain on our website to assist anyone in need.

Recognising that a diagnosis affects more than just the person, we consider it a privilege to be part of a people's village, delivering education and information that we hope really matters. Managing MS effectively often involves building a supportive community around you, a skill we are tackling this month.

## Upcoming MS Plus webinars & podcasts

### **"I think I've got MS – now what?"**

**27 May 2024 12.30 pm – 1.30 pm AEDT**

Worried you have MS?

If you've found yourself scouring the internet or experiencing symptoms similar to those of someone you know with MS, this webinar is just for you. In this prerecorded discussion, we talk with Dr. Therese Burke, an experienced MS Nurse and researcher, who addresses the typical questions people have when grappling with concerns about MS diagnosis. Afterwards, MS Nurse Jodi Haartsen will be on hand to address any further queries you may have. [Register Now!](#)

### **MS Management: It's not what you know, it's who you know**

**28 May 2024 12.30 pm – 1.30 pm AEDT**

In the lead-up to World MS Day at MS Plus, we've been delving into the significance of the support network (the village) in MS management and the value of leveraging your connections. Join us for a live webinar featuring MS Nurse Practitioner, Jodi Haartsen, who draws from over 25 years of experience as part of many people's villages. Jodi reflects on who needs to be in your village and the roles they can play and gives you practical advice on navigating complex systems. Learn how to assemble the team necessary for leading your best life. [Register Now!](#)

**The MS BOOST** is 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.](#)



#### **A little bit of sunshine – MS and Vitamin D**

Vitamin D has a complex relationship with MS, with links to increased risk of diagnosis, influencing gene expression in immune cells and generally being lower in people living with MS. In this episode, Dr Wei Yeh, MS Specialist Neurologist and researcher, discusses how much vitamin D people need, how to get it, and the role of supplementation in children of parents with MS.

[Listen now!](#)

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 new episodes are released



## In case you missed it...MS Plus Webinars from April 2024

### Genetics and MS

If you missed the webinar in April, you can catch up on the recording with genetics expert, Dr Vicki Maltby. In this webinar, Vicki unravels the genetic and epigenetic links with MS and explores genetic variations that lead to the development of conditions such as MS, the role of environmental factors such as EBV and smoking, as well as discussing inheritance patterns and the risk of children and other family members also developing MS. Catch up on this webinar [HERE!](#)

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

If you need further information or would like to speak to our MS Nurse, please contact the MS 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 is a proud provider 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](mailto:ACCVSAdmin@msplus.org.au)

## Peer Support

We have two Peer Support Groups available in the ACT, and new members are welcome at 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:** 10am, 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month **Venue:** ACT Café, Canberra

### Peer Links:

The MS Peer Links sessions are now available for registration. Check 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.

Peer Links are a great option if you're new to peer support, have an interest in a particular topic, or can't commit to an ongoing group. For more information contact Plus Connect on 1800 042 138.



## Supporting someone with a new MS diagnosis: A resource for family & friends

This booklet has been created for people who are going through the challenging and often emotional time that happens when a person they know is diagnosed with MS. Having a diagnosis of MS can be life-changing for both the person and for those who care about them. This resource is designed to empower you with the knowledge and strategies to help support you and your person with MS.

**Download the resource here:** [Click Here](#)

### 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
- \* navigating the health system
- \* where to access help and support
- \* how to take care of yourself

Register now at <https://www.msplus.org.au/news/supporting-the-loved-ones-of-people-with-ms>

# Tabletop Games

This year the group will be operating every second month.

The dates the group will meet are as follows:

**When:** Saturday 8 June , August 10, October 12 and December 14

**Where:** Gloria McKerrow House, 117 Denison Street, Deakin

**Time:** 1:30 —4:00pm, you can come and go at your leisure

Children, partners and carers are also welcome — hope to see you all! No prior knowledge required!



## Exercise Classes at Gloria McKerrow House

### Be Better Balanced

A chair-based class for people still able to walk but struggling with balance, stamina and general movement difficulties. The classes are well rounded and paced, making it fun and accessible.

**When:** Tuesdays 9.30am — 10.30am and Thursdays 10.00am – 11.00am

### 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*

## People with MS (PwMS) Taking Control Group

Our group seeks to facilitate connections, and to share information and companionship among people living with MS in the Canberra region, with a focus on living well with MS. We host regular meetings twice a month. We meet every month on the second and last Friday at 12.30pm, for around an hour or so. The meeting on the second Friday is currently via Zoom. This is a good opportunity to chat and catch up with each other without leaving our homes and for people from outside Canberra to join us. On the last Friday of the month we meet face to face at Gloria McKerrow House in Deakin.

May meetings:

- Friday 10 May, 12.30, Zoom only
- Friday 31 May, 12.30, Gloria McKerrow House, 117 Denison Street, Deakin

If you would like to be on the email list to: receive reminders of monthly meetings, including Zoom/Microsoft Teams links; be notified about presentations by expert speakers; and share news, information and feedback with us, please email Mary Webb and Vanessa Fanning at [pwmstcg@gmail.com](mailto:pwmstcg@gmail.com) to join our mailing list. Alternatively look for our page on Facebook: Canberra Region MSers.

We know that many people with MS do not necessarily wish to disclose their diagnosis, hence the names and email addresses of people who subscribe to our main mailing list are strictly confidential and are not visible to any other recipients. In line with privacy principles, you can unsubscribe at any time.

## 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](mailto:woodbridgehelen@hotmail.com).

