



PLUS
Neuro Wellbeing

Tasmania Newsletter
September 2023

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



The Hobart MS Mega Swim is back in 2023!

It is not too late to join the highly anticipated 2023 Hobart MS Mega Swim!

The Hobart MS Mega Swim is a fantastic event that brings together swimmers of all levels to raise funds for Multiple Sclerosis support services and the MS Go for Gold scholarships. It's a unique opportunity to make a positive impact while challenging yourself and having a great time.

- Date:** Saturday 7 October 2023
- Location:** Doone Kennedy Hobart Aquatic Centre
1 Davies Avenue, Queens Domain
- Time:** 10am to 10pm

Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to be a part of the 2023 Hobart MS Mega Swim.

[Register Here](#)

and start making a difference today!

Your Mega Challenge, Your Way!

Take on a 12 or 24 hour feat of endurance in the 2023 My Mega Challenge for MS, and make a life-changing impact for people living with MS.

Choose any sport or recreational activity you want and help people living with MS immediately get the support they need to live well, while the search for a cure continues. **From running, to knitting, to streaming, the choice is YOURS!**

When taking your My Mega Challenge for MS, you might feel pain, muscle spasms and fatigue – common symptoms that people living with MS battle with daily. While these feelings might not be EXACTLY what someone living with MS experiences, you will come out of the challenge with a better understanding of what MS symptoms are like.

- Date:** Saturday 25 November & Sunday 26 November, 2023
- Entry:** FREE
- Location:** Virtual

Make an impact this November in the My Mega Challenge for MS!



[Register Here](#)



We're proud to be taking part in this year's Jean Hailes Women's Health Week (4-8 September) – the biggest week in Australia focusing on good health and wellbeing for women, girls and gender diverse people.

This year's theme is Grow Your Knowledge – it's all about supporting women to make informed decisions about their health with information that's easy to understand. Starting Monday 4 September, we're excited to bring you an online program of events and resources discussing all things women's health and MS; preventative health checks and sexual health, pelvic floor management, menopause and hormones, workplace and lifestyle wellbeing, preconception nutrition, pregnancy and fertility.

[Read More](#)

Step towards a future free from MS, as you trek the spectacular Southern Alps of New Zealand

Join us on a scenically spectacular adventure through the Southern Alps of Aotearoa New Zealand's South Island to support Australians living with multiple sclerosis.

From Christchurch to Queenstown, over six days, you'll experience the history and majesty of the Southern Alps region in equal measure. Travelling north to south, by day you'll trek through

awe-inspiring landscapes, from native bushland and expansive plains to cities, canyons, countryside and coast. You'll gaze upon the turquoise waters of Lake Tekapo and explore vast wilderness areas of beech forest and enjoy inimitable views of Aotearoa New Zealand's highest peaks.

By joining this adventure, you can help raise funds to ensure that people living with multiple sclerosis have immediate and ongoing access to expert advice and vital support services – so that no one has to face MS alone.

[Request Info pack](#)



EDUCATION & WELLBEING



In September, we're excited to bring you an online program of events and resources discussing all things women's health as part of Women's Health Week. This year's theme is *Grow Your Knowledge* – it's all about supporting women to make informed decisions about their health with information that's easy to understand. We know that women living with MS face unique barriers and challenges when it comes to women's health. We want to shine a light on these challenges and give you the resources you need to make informed and empowered decisions.

Health checks for women with MS

Monday 4 September 2023, 5:00pm–6:00pm AEST

Regular health checks and screenings are vital for managing wellbeing and overall health; however it can be difficult to know what are the right health checks to have at the right time. To kick off the start of Women's Health Week, our panel of experienced nurses will discuss the health checks you need and deep dive into the barriers experienced by women in accessing these checks. We will give you the up-to-date medical recommendations on the tests you need, particularly if you are on MS medications and practical tips. Please join Jodi Haartsen, Nurse Practitioner, Louise Rath, MS Nurse Consultant, and Joanne Perks, Nurse Practitioner, who will approach the topic with the honesty and passion that nurses bring to the conversation

Managing your Pelvic Floor

Tuesday 5 September 2023 3:00pm–4:00pm AEST

Pelvic floor health is more than Kegel pelvic floor exercises! Many women with MS live with pelvic pain, have weakened pelvic floor and experience discomfort that impacts their quality of life and are not aware that there is something they can do about it. Join us for this live webinar showing a pre-recorded discussion between pelvic floor physiotherapist Rebecca Walhout and Jodi Haartsen. They discuss all things related to women's pelvic floor, how this can be impacted by MS, pregnancy and other life factors, as well as the management of issues such as bladder, bowel and sexual dysfunction. Bec will talk through what happens in a pelvic floor assessment. Jodi will then remain online to answer your questions.

Pregnancy, fertility and MS

Friday 8 September 2023, 11:00am–12:00pm AEST

This live webinar with Associate Professor Vilija Jokubaitis will discuss family planning, pregnancy and fertility in women with MS. This webinar will cover important topics including medication considerations during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Associate Professor Vilija Jokubaitis is a Research Group Leader at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. Her research focus lies in MS prognostics and treatment individualisation, with a particular focus on MS genetics, Women's Health and pregnancy research. A/Prof Jokubaitis leads an International Women in Neurology Group who are collaborating to address the key issues facing women with MS and doing the vital research

we need. A/Prof Jokubaitis also heads up the global registry capturing pregnancy outcomes and women's health related data. Don't miss this webinar that will give you the very latest medical information.

Menopause with Dr Fatima Khan

Webinar on demand – Watch anytime!

This webinar is one of our most popular webinars. Join menopause expert Dr Fatima Kahn as she defines menopause and perimenopause and discusses management strategies for women currently experiencing symptoms. Fatima is passionate about providing women with information in a practical and holistic way to enhance women's complete physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. For any questions following this recorded webinar, you can follow up with our MS Nurse Advisors via Plus Connect 1800 042 138.

Connecting with women's health

Podcast – Listen anytime!

A discussion about stigma, barriers and women's health issues, including the future of women's health and MS.

Menopause and MS with Dr Francesca Bridge

Podcast – Launched in Women's Health Week!

Dr Francesca Bridge is a Multiple Sclerosis and Neuroimmunology Fellow at the Alfred and PhD Candidate at Monash University. Clinically, Francesca cares for people with MS and other neuroimmunological conditions. Her research interests lie in women's health and multiple sclerosis. Specifically, the impact of menopause on MS disease activity and the risk of cervical cancer in MS. In this podcast, Dr Bridge discusses the relationship between sex hormones and MS disease activity, and clinical course, particularly around the time of menopause. She discusses treatments for menopause and empowers women to talk about their experience.

Preconception, diet and fertility

Podcast – Launched in Women's Health Week!

Nutrition can play an important role for women when trying to conceive, and it can be hard to find evidence-based information when thinking about making changes to your diet. In this podcast, Accredited Practising Dietitian and Certified Fertility Dietitian, Mariam Metwally discusses the impact of nutrition on preconception and fertility, and the specific considerations for women with MS.

The will to help



Elizabeth Meredith always wanted to make life better for other people. It's why she became a medical scientist and educator. Over the years, Elizabeth has conducted research into various diseases and managed hospital labs in Melbourne and Toronto.

But with multiple sclerosis (MS), her interest became personal. That's because her daughter Sue developed the neurological condition 30 years ago. "The whole family became involved," recalled Elizabeth. Bill, her beloved late husband, started volunteering with MS Plus first. He often drove patients to events organised by the charity and chatted with them over cups of tea. Sue's children participated in the MS Readathon, and other family members supported MS events.

Fortunately, Sue's MS is the slow-progressing kind. She's still quite healthy and active, even playing tennis. But the family is mindful that the disease is always there. **Elizabeth also became involved to make life better for those with MS.** For many years, a poignant project for the family was fundraising for the MS Plus **Go for Gold Meredith Scholarship**. The family set up the scholarship in 2004 in Bill's memory. **A collection at Bill's funeral to kick-start the scholarship raised over \$1000.** Since he was an opera and music lover, the family decided the annual scholarship should go to a musician with MS who needed funds to achieve a dream. One time the scholarship went to a talented jazz musician who needed money to rent a studio to make a CD. Another time it went to an opera singer who lost her voice due to MS. She later regained it through voice training paid for through the scholarship.

More recently, Elizabeth has decided to make a difference beyond her lifetime. The Melbourne retiree, now 92, was recently inspired to leave a gift in her Will to MS Plus. She joins an increasing number of Australians doing the same thing. **"Perhaps my legacy could lead to better treatments, and I'm optimistic about a cure. But MS Plus can only do research and operate if it has adequate resources, and I want my gift to play a part in that work," she said.** "While I will naturally provide for my family, I appreciate the support MS Plus has given us." To ensure she can leave her legacy, Elizabeth has been putting a small sum aside each month, knowing that even a modest amount can make a difference. **"You don't have to be wealthy to do this," she said.** Elizabeth said it's vital to help charities that receive less attention.

"MS doesn't have the same prominence that other charities do, like children's hospitals or cancer. That's why I want to help," she explained. She hopes that other people reading her story will follow suit.

At MS Plus, a charitable gift could go towards research to improve treatments and help fast-track a cure. A gift in your Will could also enhance the support services of people with MS. Or you could elect to fund both. It's your decision.

MS GIFT PLANNING

Want to know more? MS Plus has a Gift Planning Program. Call Laura or Rebecca on 1800 443 867, email futureplanning@ms.org.au or visit www.mymslegacy.org.au.

Plus Navigate Series Friends & Family

Learn from experts:

Session 1: MS – your questions answered

Session 2: Navigating the health system and finding support

Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about MS and how you can support your loved one!

Day and evening sessions available.

Register today - it's free!



Services available with little or no wait time



Plus Exercise
Physiology



Plus Diet and
Nutrition



Plus Physiotherapy



Plus Support
Coordination



Plus Plan
Management

Contact us today

Peer Support Groups



CIRCULAR HEAD

Meets: First Monday of the month, 7:00-8:30pm

Next Meeting: No meeting in September

Guest Speaker:

Venue: Circular Head Rural Health

EASTERN SHORE

Meets: Second Friday of the month,
10:30am-12noon, followed by lunch

Next Meeting: 8 September

Guest Speaker: TBC

Venue: Mornington Inn

GLENORCHY

Meets: Last Monday of the month, 6:00-8:00pm

Venue: Glenorchy or Moonah

Next Meetings: 28 August & 25 September

Social gathering, meals own cost.

NEW NORFOLK

Meets: First Wednesday of the month,
10:30am-12noon

Venue: New Norfolk

Next Meeting: Wed 6 September

Social gathering, coffees, and cake etc. at own cost

MENS GROUP

Meets: Third Friday of the month, 12 midday -2pm

Venue: Dr Syntax, Sandy Bay

Next Meeting: 15 September

Guest speaker: Socialising

LAUNCESTON

Meets: Third Saturday of the month, 11 am onwards

Venue: Peppers Silo Hotel, Lounge room First Floor

Next meeting : 16 September at 11am

Guest Speaker: Socialising

SHEFFIELD

Meets: Not meeting at present

Venue: Sheffield Rural Health

WYNYARD

Meets: Third Wednesday of the month
Midday onwards

Venue: Bruce's Café, Wynyard

Next Meeting: To be confirmed

Coffee catch up

ULVERSTONE

Meets: Fourth Wednesday of the month,
11:00am-1:00pm

Next Meeting: 27 September

Guest speaker: Socialising

Venue: Ulverstone Life Saving Club

RSVP: connect@msplus.org.au



The AMSLS: Sharing your lived experience of MS

The Australian MS Longitudinal Study (AMSLS) is a survey-based research study designed to provide a comprehensive picture of all Australians living with MS.

About 3000 people share their lived experience of MS through AMSLS research surveys each year, on diverse areas such as employment, the cost of living with MS and disability, through to medication use, sleep quality and the effect of MS on self-concept. The real-life data gathered provides a critical evidence base for improving services, treatments and advocacy to improve the quality of life of people living with MS.

Remarkably, the AMSLS — a partnership between the Menzies Institute for Medical Research and MS Australia — is Australia's longest-running study of "patient-reported outcomes" in MS, and one of the longest-running in the world.

If you're living with MS in Australia and aged 18 or older you're eligible to join, and by sharing your stories about living with multiple sclerosis you can help support vital research. The more participants the greater the impact of our research, so consider joining this world-leading study today.

Want to know more?

- ◆ **Visit:** msaustralia.org.au/amsls
- ◆ **Email:** AMSLS.info@utas.edu.au
- ◆ **Phone:** 03 6226 4739



JOIN THE AUSTRALIAN MS LONGITUDINAL STUDY TODAY

Together we can help improve the quality of life for people living with MS.

Visit msaustralia.org.au/amsls

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Free online course enrol now

UNDERSTANDING MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA

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Understanding Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is an award-winning **FREE** online course for anyone with an interest in MS. More than 39,000 people from 170+ countries have enrolled to date. Participate at your own pace, anywhere and any time (day or night) that suits you — all you need to access the course is a smart phone, computer or tablet. The next course starts in September and you can

[ENROL HERE](#)

Course at a glance:

Opens: 11tSeptember 2023, 9:00am (AEST)

Duration: 6 weeks

Estimated effort: 2 hrs per week

Completion certificate: Yes

Cost: **FREE**