



**PLUS**  
Neuro Wellbeing

Tasmania Newsletter  
April 2024

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

## 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](#)



## Better balance for fall prevention

Improve your confidence, function and mobility with our evidence-based falls and balance class!



LEARN MORE



April is Falls month, and at MS Plus, we're dedicated to helping you achieve better balance and prevent falls. With our [Plus Balance classes](#) and expert support from our [physiotherapists](#) and [exercise physiologists](#), you can improve your balance and reduce your risk of falls! Ready to improve your confidence, function and mobility? Reach out to Plus Connect to book a telehealth appointment or come see us at our Hobart Wellbeing Centre today!

☐ 1800 042 138 ☐ [connect@msplus.org.au](mailto:connect@msplus.org.au)

# MS WALK RUN+ROLL



## Sun 26 May 2024 Inveresk Precinct



Invermay TAS 7248

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

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Register,  
donate or  
volunteer  
today

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

# Eternal Bonds: A Legacy of Love and Hope

It was 1976 in Cape Town, South Africa. There lived a beautiful young girl named Rosalind Lewis. Rosalind was known for her vibrant spirit and zest for life. Amitai Lapidot loved her dearly.

Tragically, Rosalind was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS). This is a relentless foe. It gradually took away her ability to move freely and enjoy life's simple pleasures. Eventually, Rosalind's health declined, and she passed away. This left a terrible wound and a void in Amitai's heart. Amitai could not, at that time, step in and do much to help her fight this disease.

Now, many years later, a seed of inspiration took root within Amitai. Amidst the long-held sorrow, he was determined to honour Rosalind's memory. He wanted to do it in a way that would make a lasting impact on the lives of others grappling with MS.

Amitai is a longstanding supporter of MS Plus. He learnt about research and support. He saw how crucial they are in the fight against multiple sclerosis. Thus, Amitai decided to leave a gift in his Will. A gift in memory of Rosalind. When the time comes, it is his wish that it will be used for research into a cure. Amitai's gift is a testament to the enduring power of friendship and love. To the ability to turn tragedy into triumph. Now it is the legacy of Amitai and Rosalind that lives on. Proving that even in the face of loss, the human spirit has the capacity to create positive changes.

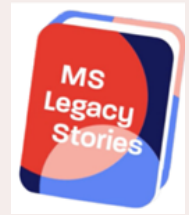


Many MS Plus supporters like to include a gift in their Wills. You have supported the fight against MS before. Leaving a gift in your Will is a way to continue this support. It is about the values we share and that you hold dear in your heart.

Every time you think about the gift you will make, you will get a warm, happy feeling. Every gift, no matter what size, will make a difference. Because you'll know you will be helping a person living with MS have a better life.

At MS Plus, your charitable gift could go towards research. It would 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.

**Want to know more?** MS Plus has a Gift Planning Program. Call Laura or Rebecca on 1800 443 867, email [futureplanning@msplus.org.au](mailto:futureplanning@msplus.org.au), or visit [www.mymslegacy.org.au](http://www.mymslegacy.org.au).



## The MS Research Flagship presents: Research with Connections 2024

Join the MS Research Flagship for a day of research and community presentations, conversations and celebrations.

Date: 28th June 2024

Time: 9am — 4pm

Venue: MyState Bank Arena, Hobart

Free event with lunch, tea and coffee provided.  
Free, accessible parking.

Tickets: [bit.ly/MSFlagshipResearchConnections2024](https://bit.ly/MSFlagshipResearchConnections2024)

For more details visit [msresearchflagship.org.au](http://msresearchflagship.org.au)

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA  
**MENZIES**   
Institute for Medical Research

**MS** Research  
Flagship

# what's on

Exploring the latest programs and updates from client engagement and wellbeing



## Upcoming MS Plus Webinars & Podcasts

**MS Genetics and Epigenetics with Vicki Maltby**  
**18 April 2024, 12.30pm – 1.30pm AEDT**

[Register now](#)

Genetics have a crucial, albeit partially understood, influence on MS. Although MS isn't directly inherited, specific genetic variations can heighten a person's risk of developing the disease. Understanding the significance of genetics and epigenetics may be a key to unlocking further insights into MS, its progression, and the enhancement of treatments. In our webinar, we'll feature a pre-recorded talk by Dr. Vicki Maltby, offering a comprehensive look at genetics and epigenetics in relation to MS. After the presentation a MS Nurse will be on hand to address any questions.



### The MS BOOST

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.**

**Brain health & why it's never too late to make a change - Listen Now!**

Olivia Wills, a brain health researcher talks about a holistic model of brain health in MS. Olivia outlines why brain health can be seen as a tangible concept that people can control by exercising, quitting smoking, managing comorbidities, eating well, and managing mental health. Olivia shares it's never too late for anyone to adopt healthier behaviours.

### **AHSCT and MS - Listen Now!**

We chatted with neurologist Dr Cassie Nesbitt, one of the principal investigators for autologous hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (AHSCT) at the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne. Cassie explains the process of AHSCT, risks and considerations for accessing AHSCT overseas, as well as the current research on who is likely to benefit and how this is accessed in Australia.

### **The kids aren't alright – helping teens with their parents' diagnosis - Listen Now!**

In this episode of the MS Boost, we talk to Nicola Palfrey, Clinical Psychologist and Head of Clinical Leadership at Headspace, about the parenting challenge of talking to teenagers about chronic illness. Nicola shares her expert insights into approaching these difficult conversations sensitively. We also explore the important topic of knowing the signs that your teen may need some mental health support and how to navigate access. If you are a parent with teenagers, this is an episode you will really appreciate.

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.



## MS Plus Webinars from February 2024

### Progression Independent of Relapse Activity (PIRA)

In the world of MS, new terms and concepts constantly emerge, leaving many people wondering what it means for them. One such term is Progressive Independent of Relapse Activity (PIRA), which describes a specific type of MS progression, and this was discussed by neurologists Professor Helmut Butzkueven and Associate Professor Anneke Van Der Walt in the latest webinar recording which can be found [HERE](#).

Here are some key takeaways from the webinar:

- Progression Independent of Relapse Activity (PIRA) signifies a continuous decline in neurological function without any relapse activity.
- Relapse Associated Worsening (RAW) is deterioration due to an MS attack or relapse.
- PIRA can happen to anyone with MS at any time of their diagnosis.
- Currently, there's no test for a PIRA event, and the need for a holistic neurological assessment that takes into account factors such as general health and mental wellbeing is important.
- PIRA progresses subtly and slowly; rapid symptom changes typically don't indicate a PIRA event.
- PIRA is different to Secondary Progressive MS and Primary Progressive MS, however SPMS and PPMS may consist of numerous PIRA events by showing steady worsening without relapses.
- Smouldering MS is characterized by chronic active lesions causing ongoing damage and is a term for things seen on MRI and is different to a PIRA event.
- While smouldering MS is linked to SPMS risk, PIRA events can occur regardless of it.
- The definition of PIRA varies, making its prevalence hard to determine.
- Reducing the risk of a PIRA event involves early use of effective MS treatments and a healthy lifestyle, including regular exercise and a healthy diet for brain health and wellbeing.
- Understanding PIRA and its role in MS progression could lead to developing targeted therapeutic interventions.
- Ongoing research aims to identify drugs that can prevent the chronic inflammation associated with PIRA.

PIRA is a term that sheds light on a specific form of MS progression. It highlights the importance of early intervention, regular neurological assessments, and expert and comprehensive care for people with MS. While more research is needed to fully understand PIRA and its implications, the collective efforts of healthcare professionals, researchers, and people with MS contribute to continued progress in understanding and managing MS progression.

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.

### 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](https://msplus.org.au/artshow)



# Peer Support Groups



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

<p><b>CIRCULAR HEAD</b>  <b>Meets:</b> First Monday of the month, 7:00-8:30pm  <b>Venue:</b> Circular Head Rural Health</p> <p><b>EASTERN SHORE</b>  <b>Meets:</b> Second Friday of the month, 10:30am-12noon, followed by lunch  <b>Venue:</b> Mornington Inn</p> <p><b>GLENORCHY *</b>  <b>Meets:</b> Last <u>Tuesday</u> of the month, 6:00-8:00pm  <b>Venue:</b> Glenorchy or Moonah</p> <p><b>NEW NORFOLK</b>  <b>Meets:</b> First Wednesday of the month, 10:30am-12noon  <b>Venue:</b> New Norfolk</p>	<p><b>LAUNCESTON</b>  <b>Meets:</b> Third Saturday of the month, 11 am onwards  <b>Venue:</b> Various café's in Launceston</p> <p><b>WYNYARD</b>  <b>Meets:</b> Third Wednesday of the month Midday onwards  <b>Venue:</b> Bruce's Café, Wynyard</p> <p><b>ULVERSTONE</b>  <b>Meets:</b> Fourth Wednesday of the month, 11:00am-1:00pm  <b>Venue:</b> Ulverstone Life Saving Club</p> <p><b>MENS GROUP</b>  <b>Meets:</b> Third Friday of the month, 12 midday -2pm  <b>Venue:</b> Dr Syntax, Sandy Bay</p>
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## CHANGE OF DAY

\* **GLENORCHY**—Now meeting **last Tuesday** of the month



## 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](#)

**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 and register, visit

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

The TAURUS.2 trial is looking for people living in Hobart with

# MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Can you help our researchers find out if low intensity Magnetic Brain Stimulation (MBS) is an effective treatment for MS?

## YOU MAY BE ABLE TO HELP IF YOU

- are age 18-65
- can walk unaided or with a stick
- can attend short daily appointments at Menzies (Mon-Fri) for 4 weeks
- can complete 2 MRI and 3 clinical assessments
- do not have a history of seizures or serious brain injury
- have not received MBS before



Please contact Kate Probert:

(03) 6226 7746

katherine.probert@utas.edu.au

Free parking onsite/All reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed. \$50 Voucher on completion.

This study has been approved by The University of Tasmania Human Research Ethics Committee, H0026359

**MS** Research  
Flagship

UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA

**MENZIES**

Institute for Medical Research

<https://mstrials.org.au/taurus2/>