MS PLUS Neuro Wellbeing

Tasmania Newsletter
March 2024

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

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

The moment we've all been waiting for is finally here!

Registrations for the highly anticipated 2024 Launceston MS Walk Run + Roll are officially OPEN!

Spread the word to your friends and mark your calendars for Sunday 26 May as we come together at Inveresk Precinct, Invermay 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.

EVENT DATE
Sunday 26 May 2024

LOCATION
Inveresk Precinct, Invermay

START TIMES
WALK—9.30 AM RUN—9.00 AM
ROLL—9.30 AM

COURSES
4.5 KM and 9.5 KM VIEW MAP

REGISTER HERE

Hobart Wellbeing Centre
Everything you need for wellbeing and connection in one place!

Our services
- Employment support service
- Exercise physiology
- Information and advice
- NDIS access support and services

via telehealth
- Continence support
- Diet and nutrition
- Occupational therapy
- Physiotherapy

Contact us
Call 1800 042 138

Email us
connect@msplus.org.au

Come visit us!
246 Murray Street, Hobart

Click Here

MS PLUS
Neuro Wellbeing

what's on

Exploring the latest programs and updates from client engagement and wellbeing

Upcoming MS Plus Webinars & Podcasts

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 the 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, as 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.

what's on ...

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 peer support group, contact Plus Connect on 1800 042 138.

CIRCULAR HEAD
Meets: First Monday of the month, 7:00-8:30pm
Venue: Circular Head Rural Health

EASTERN SHORE
Meets: Second Friday of the month, 10:30am-12noon, followed by lunch
Venue: Mornington Inn

GLENORCHY
Meets: Last Monday of the month, 6:00-8:00pm
Venue: Glenorchy or Moonah

NEW NORFOLK
Meets: First Wednesday of the month, 10:30am-12noon
Venue: New Norfolk

LAUNCESTON
Meets: Third Saturday of the month, 11 am onwards
Venue: Various café's in Launceston

WYNYARD
Meets: Third Wednesday of the month Midday onwards
Venue: Bruce's Café, Wynyard

ULVERSTONE
Meets: Fourth Wednesday of the month, 11:00am-1:00pm
Venue: Ulverstone Life Saving Club

MENS GROUP
Meets: Third Friday of the month, 12 midday -2pm
Venue: Dr Syntax, Sandy Bay

Peer Support Volunteers - from participant to facilitator: Kerry Kievit

"When you're first diagnosed with MS, you can feel very isolated. What made a difference for me was being welcomed and made to feel a part of something bigger than myself. That sense of inclusion was almost like a big hug, and it's helped me to become more resilient." - Kerry Kievit, person with MS

Peer Support volunteer

Our Peer Support Volunteers just 'get it'. They understand what it's like to live with MS. Kerry Kievit is one of our valued volunteers leading one of our many peer support groups in Tasmania, but she started as a nervous new participant.

Kerry remembers, "The first meeting I went to, I was a little bit apprehensive". Soon she was part of a group that made her feel welcome and understood what she was going through. "I didn't have to explain why my words weren't coming out!".

Join us

We couldn't continue to run our peer support groups without the generous time and experience of our volunteers. To ensure everyone has the opportunity to join a group, we are looking for more peer support volunteers to lead groups. To find out more about how to get involved contact 1800 042 138, or email **peersupport@msplus.org.au**.

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.

what's on ...

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 knowledge and passion for supporting mental health and wellbeing for carers. 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. **Search 'MS Podcasts' on your preferred player and follow to be notified when the episode is published**.

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**

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

The MAY 50K launches 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!

Click here for more info.

“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.

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

Understanding Multiple Sclerosis

Understanding MS is a free online course with positive impacts!

Not only do course completers improve their knowledge of multiple sclerosis, nearly two-thirds (63%) say they applied their learnings in their everyday lives, and 97% report they will recommend it to someone else.

Course opens: 11 March 2024

Course duration: 6 weeks

Estimated effort: 2 hours per week

Cost: FREE

Enrol today

CRICOS 00586B

Free online course
enrol now

UNDERSTANDING MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA
MENZIES
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AUSTRALIA

Volunteers needed to help spit in the face of MS!

The Menzies Institute for Medical Research is carrying out an Australia-wide study investigating the connection between Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) and multiple sclerosis (MS). It also aims to identify specific biomarkers associated with onset and progression of MS. The knowledge gained from this research will potentially improve MS diagnosis, treatment and prevention.

The researchers need the help (and saliva) of people living with MS who are 18 years and above, have been diagnosed with MS by a neurologist and, importantly, are NOT receiving treatment.

Participation involves:

- completing a questionnaire
- providing three saliva samples (postal submissions accepted)
- giving a blood sample (optional)

To volunteer, complete our screening survey (approx. 5-10 minutes). It can also be accessed by scanning the QR code.

For more information contact Dr Chhavi Asthana, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, MS Research Flagship, Menzies Institute for Medical Research.

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