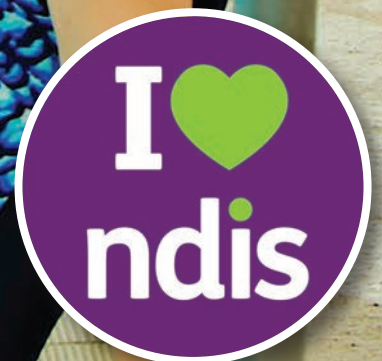


Autumn 2018 Network

MS

In this issue

- NDIS pre-planning tips 8
- World MS Day 2018 16
- Diving in for MS 18
- A healthy brain, the key to living well with MS 21



In this issue

CEO report.....	3
Client Services Manager report.....	4
Meet the MS team.....	4
International Nurse's Day.....	4
MS Society of SA & NT is NDIS registered!	6
Helpful hints for NDIS management.....	7
Pre-planning tips for your NDIS planning meeting.....	8
Upcoming community events.....	10
2018 Autumn/Winter calendar.....	11
Peer Support calendar.....	15
Research is #bringinguscloser to ending MS.....	16
Diving in for MS.....	18
Amira's laughing her way through MS.....	20
A healthy brain, the key to living well with MS.....	21
Employment solutions.....	22
Visit us.....	23

Get in touch

Editorial and advertising enquiries

Network Editor – Ashleigh Chapman
T (08) 7002 6500
E communications@ms.asn.au

MS Society of SA & NT head office

341 North East Road, Hillcrest SA 5086
T (08) 7002 6500
Free Call 1800 812 311
E msassist@ms.asn.au
www.ms.asn.au

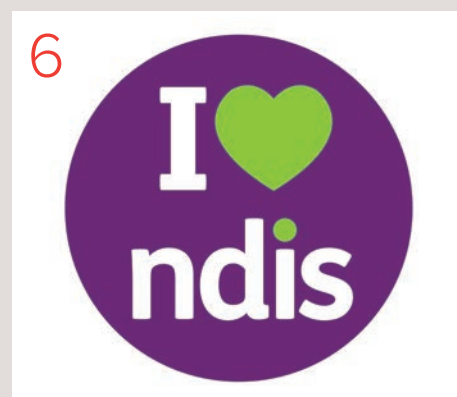
Find us online



Disclaimer

MS Society Privacy Policy: The MS Society of SA & NT is committed to the protection of private information. A full copy of the *MS Society Privacy Policy* is available over the phone on (08) 7002 6500 or online at www.ms.asn.au.

Disclaimer: Material published in *Network* may not be reproduced in any form without permission from the MS Society. Any views expressed are not necessarily the views of the MS Society. The MS Society does not endorse any product over another, nor do we receive any commission on sale of items. The MS Society is not liable in the event the product is not satisfactory.



CEO report

Andrew Ellis



After a number of months spent reviewing our internal processes, we are now registered under the NDIS to provide therapy, support coordination and other services. This is a significant milestone for the Society which will help us to provide additional services to those living with multiple sclerosis.

It's exciting to see the new hydro-therapy class opening in Hayborough of which we hope to see other new locations start up later in the year.

Our Board and management team have spent the past few months reviewing the MS Society's vision and mission. We are now in the process of seeking feedback from some members on this and are looking forward to providing further announcements on the new vision and mission in due course.

A highlight of the last quarter was that more than 300 people participated in the MS Mighty Swim. My 8.5km in the pool was fairly small compared to what some others achieved. It was a fantastic display of community to see so many people come together and raise funds to support our work into providing services and supporting MS research.

I thank Unley Council and Unley Swimming Centre for their support, as well as our other sponsors.

As we go about re-building the local South Australian management team, I am pleased to report we have appointed Tracey Finlay as our new Fundraising Manager and Ashleigh Chapman as the Marketing and Communications Coordinator.

Please contact Ashleigh with any suggestions or feedback on content to include in the quarterly Network magazine or monthly Vitality e-newsletter – we are always looking to share stories of people within our community, and to keep our content as relevant and useful as possible for our readers.

Please take the time to read this issue of Network and take in all of the new and exciting updates and activities coming up this quarter within the MS Society, all aimed to help people with multiple sclerosis to live well.

Andrew Ellis

Chief Executive Officer
MS Society of SA & NT

SA'S BEST ODDS HOME LOTTERY

GRAND PRIZE

\$1.6 MILLION

**METRICON HOME
& LAND PACKAGE**



\$1.5 MILLION

COLD HARD CASH

BUY YOUR TICKETS TODAY!

1300 983 991 MSGAMECHANGER.COM.AU



Lottery Licence: M13425

Client Services Manager report

Kate Mason



It's been an exciting start to 2018 in Client Services. We have kicked off our gym and hydrotherapy programs for the year and are very excited to offer hydrotherapy classes at the newly built Hayborough pool located just outside of Victor Harbor.

This opportunity to offer supports and services to the Fleurieu Peninsula has been a long-time goal which has now become a reality.

We are also very excited about the new programs and classes we will be offering throughout the year, including a Falls Prevention and Balance Program due to start mid-year, and a Wellbeing Program currently being developed for people with MS ready for a mid-year launch. Stay tuned for updates on these exciting new offerings.

As you may have heard we are now a NDIS registered provider. This means we are able to provide support to people receiving funding from the NDIS with their therapy needs, community inclusion and support coordination, just to name a few. This new opportunity compliments the NDIS pre-planning support we have been offering.

Please see page 6 for more information about the NDIS and how the MS Society can help you.

In addition to providing NDIS services, I want to assure you all that we support all people living with MS from newly diagnosed through to Over 65. If you would like to discuss further how we can assist you, please contact **MS Assist** on **1800 812 311**.

In staffing news, we have welcomed a new face to our team. Anita Webber, our new Wellbeing and Social Support Coordinator, started with us in January. Anita has jumped into the role with passion and incredible knowledge and insight. She is able to support you in a range of areas including NDIS pre-planning support. See opposite for more information about Anita.

As we welcome new faces we are also farewelling long time staff. Helen McCarl, our Senior Nurse will be retiring from her role at the end of April. Over the past 15 years, Helen has been a dedicated nurse who has supported many people living with MS. Nurses are a first point of contact for many people living with MS and Helen has always been an incredible support to people needing assistance and guidance through their MS journey.

Helen's dedication, empathy and passion for people living with MS has been an amazing asset to the organisation and an incredible example to all staff; but most of all for the clients she has directly engaged with. Helen will be greatly missed here at the MS Society; we wish her well in her new adventure. Please see page 5 for a farewell note from Helen.

Kate Mason

Client Services Manager
MS Society of SA & NT

Meet the MS team

Introducing Anita



With a passion for working with people and communities, the newest addition to our client services team, Anita, is looking forward to supporting and advocating for people with MS in her new role as Wellbeing and Social Support Coordinator.

Anita is your new go-to source for all questions regarding your NDIS plan,

International Nurse

This International Nurse's Day (12 May) join us in celebrating our wonderful MS nurses and all of the support they lend to people with MS every day.

Our MS nurses are often the first call for clients wishing to discuss new or existing symptoms and how to manage them.

NURSES
A VOICE TO LEAD
HEALTH IS A HUMAN RIGHT

with her primary role being to provide support coordination to those who need help navigating their NDIS plans. This support coordination function is funded through the NDIS as a capacity building support.

"I work with NDIS participants to help them utilise their support budget and achieve their goals. I provide information and referrals, work with clients to negotiate services and prices, assist with service agreements, resolve problems or issues that arise, and assist with plan reviews," Anita says.

But that's not all, outside of support coordination she is available to assist with any wellbeing or social concerns/ queries our clients and customers may be experiencing.

Anita can support you to access a range of services including housing, social inclusion, legal and financial, advocacy, information sourcing, and applying for NDIS and Centrelink payments.

Anita comes from an extensive background in community services,

including work with Indigenous communities, women and youth services, refugee organisations, and aged and disability care. She has also completed Honours in International Development and is currently working through her Masters in Social Work.

Growing up, Anita and her family moved around a lot and she found herself living in Adelaide, Sydney, and the Gold Coast throughout her childhood. Today, she is settled in Adelaide but still has a desire to keep moving. Later this year, she is planning to travel to Germany, where her grandparents were born and raised to trace their footsteps before migrating to Australia. Not only does Anita have a passion for people, she also has a love for dogs—more specifically her Jack Russell cross puppy, named Mei, who she has recently adopted from the RSPCA.

Please contact Anita through **MS Assist** on **1800 812 311**, if you need any assistance or support.

They also provide information about treatments and are the first contact for the newly diagnosed – following consultation with a neurologist.

As a team, our nurses Helen, Pam and Emma aim to become allies with people with MS in promoting health and wellness. This challenge and the trust placed in them by people with MS, keeps them motivated each day.

For advice regarding MS symptoms or treatments, visit our MS nurses at our Hillcrest office, or contact them through **MS Assist** on **1800 812 311** or at msassist@ms.asn.au



Helen says goodbye

Almost 15 years ago, I walked tentatively into the old MS House on North East Road.

I had come from an acute hospital working in the world of newborn babies, drips, wounds and drug rounds! I did wonder and ask myself why I needed to change the focus of my work.

On reflection, it was for many reasons, and in hindsight it was the best decision I could have made.

I have been incredibly fortunate to meet with many, many people with MS, along with their families and friends. I have shared stories, witnessed the highs and the lows, and been privileged to have a window into some of your lives. I thank each and every person I have met or spoken to since 2003. You are the reason I come to work. I even get my newborn baby fix from time to time!

The team I work with would have to be the most dedicated group you could ask for. Their empathy, and drive to ensure, that within the incredible constraints we have had, they deliver the best they can do for each and every person.

I am about to finish my full time working career and transition into retirement. I have always worried about what time is the right time, but there does not seem to be an answer to that question. I may reappear back from time to time to do a casual day or two, and hopefully continue my ties to the MS Society. So it is really just 'see you later...'

se's Day



MS Society of SA & NT is NDIS registered!

What does this mean for you?

As a registered NDIS provider, this means that the MS Society is now able to support those receiving NDIS funding from the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) by providing support coordination, therapy services, home modifications, community inclusion, and assessment for plan reviews, just to name a few.

We also continue to support people with NDIS pre-planning. This essential support enables people to clarify what supports and services they require, as

well as their goals for the future before going into a planning session. We have developed a planning tool to support you through this process. Please contact **MS Assist** to request a copy.

Here at the MS Society, we understand that the NDIS can be an overwhelming process and that is why our dedicated NDIS and Client Services teams are happy to help you navigate your way through this process. Please contact MS Assist to discuss how we can support you when navigating the NDIS to achieve your goals.



Registered NDIS Provider

To find us on the NDIS portal simply type in MS Society of SA & NT or Multiple Sclerosis Society of South Australia & Northern Territory to find us in the registered provider listings.

Support coordination

Support coordination assists you to put your plan into action and make sure that you get the best results out of your plan. The aim is to help you get the support you need to achieve your goals.

This is a service that is determined at your planning meeting.

For all your support coordination needs, contact Anita through **MS Assist**.

Therapy services

Here at the MS Society we offer occupational therapy and physiotherapy services to people with MS.

We can support you to access these services to increase your capacity to live the life you want to live.

Visit our Hillcrest office or call **MS Assist** to set up a consultation with our occupational therapy team or our physiotherapist to assess your needs.

Home modification

Our occupational therapy team can support you with assessment and reports for any modifications required within your home to enable you to maintain your independence.

Visit our Hillcrest office or call **MS Assist** to organise a consultation with our occupational therapy team.

Over 65 and not eligible for the NDIS?

If you are Over 65 and not eligible for the NDIS, you are still eligible to receive support. The MS Society is able to assist you with navigating the number of supports and services available for people Over 65, including the

My Aged Care system. Some people aged Over 65 may have transitioned to the Continuity of Support program, commonly referred to as CoS. This means that the supports you had received through the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) prior to NDIS, continues until your needs change.

For more information about your support needs and how the MS Society can best help to support you, contact **MS Assist** on **1800 812 311** or at msassist@ms.asn.au



Helpful hints for NDIS management

There are many options you can choose to help you to manage your NDIS plan, once it has been approved. Deciding which of these options will work best for you and your needs, can be overwhelming and difficult to understand.

Below we have outlined your funding and service management options to help you make an informed decision when going into your NDIS planning meeting.

In-kind services

Some of you may have come across 'in-kind services' in your NDIS plans; but what does this mean?

In-kind services are a pre-allocated amount of funding which has been provided to an agency's therapy services to deliver the service in your plan. This service is completely customisable and you do not have to stay with the agency provided as set out in your plan.

If you wish to have another provider deliver the services in your NDIS plan you can request this in writing. Your Local Area Coordinator (LAC) or support coordinator can support you to do this.

For more information on in-kind services, or any other support coordination needs, please contact Anita via **MS Assist**.

Managing your money

In the NDIS planning process you will choose how the money in your plan is managed. Will you manage the money yourself, does the NDIS manage it for you, or is there an external professional you can go to?



The answer is all of the above, and in some cases even a combination of all three. There are four options you can choose from to help you manage your money to suit your needs.

1. Agency managed

This means the NDIA will pay all of your service bills using the funding as set out in your NDIS plan. However, you can only choose providers who are NDIS registered, which means they have met the regulations set out by the NDIS.

This is a great option for those who are not physically able, or who simply do not wish to pay their bills or keep their own paperwork; however, this also limits you to selected NDIS registered providers.

2. Self-managed

This option means that you will be in charge of looking after all of your own bills, requiring you to pay invoices and open a bank account dedicated to NDIS payments. This will require you to be good at keeping records and keeping track of NDIS expenditure.

This option will give you the freedom to choose where you purchase services from, as you will not be restricted to only NDIS registered providers.

The down side to this is you will have to be good at budgeting as you might have to pay for things in advance before being reimbursed by the NDIS.

3. Plan managed

This means you can choose someone who will manage the bills and invoices on your behalf, as the NDIS will pay a registered plan manager to manage your NDIS funding. This option gives you the freedom to choose which provider/s you would like to purchase your services from, while someone else sorts out the bills. In some cases; however, bills might be paid late.

4. Combination

You might even like to customise your money management plan, by using a mixture of all three of the options above, to help you manage your NDIS plan in a way that suits you.

For example, you might like to self-manage some areas of your NDIS plan, such as purchasing continence products; but have the agency or plan manager sort out the rest.

For more information about NDIS management, please contact our dedicated NDIS team at **MS Assist** on **1800 812 311**.

Pre-planning tips for your NDIS planning meeting

Source: Sam Paor, The Growing Space

1



Keep a log or journal of your disability related needs over a week

Take the time to write down everything you do and the necessities you spend money on, which are vital for you to be able to live an ordinary life with your disability. These must be things you would not do or spend money on if you did not have a disability.

Give a copy of this to your NDIS planner or LAC at your planning meeting, as evidence of the everyday supports you need to live an ordinary life.

2



Hold on to copies of recent reports or assessments from allied health professionals

Take any reports or assessments from your GP, specialist or other health professionals, along to your planning meeting. This information can be used as further evidence to support your case.

But don't worry if you don't have any – you do not need to pay for extra reports before your planning meeting.

3



Nominees generally don't need guardianship or administration orders

If an NDIS participant chooses someone to be their nominee, guardianship and administration orders usually are not necessary.

The NDIS recognises natural relationships between people with disability and their family members, carers and others – with rare exceptions.

6



Decide whether you want someone close to you to help manage your NDIS plan

Will you need help managing your NDIS funding now and/or in the future? Is there someone close to you that can help you? Perhaps, a parent, sibling or unpaid carer who you trust?

Make sure you ask this person if they are happy to be your nominee, before your planning meeting.

7



Decide how you'd like to conduct your planning meeting

Your planning meeting can be done over the phone, at the NDIS/LAC offices, out in the community, or in your own home.

Let your planner know which option works best for you, and arrangements can be made to suit your needs.

8



Be prepared to answer questions about your needs

At the start of your planning meeting (or sometimes before, over the phone) your NDIS planner will ask you a bunch of questions designed to determine your levels of disability related needs.

Make sure you are prepared to concentrate and answer these questions thoughtfully. These questions are a big part of what decides your funding levels.

These are general tips, which will vary for each individual situation, so always check directly with the NDIS or your LAC, as processes change rapidly. The MS Society's NDIS Pre-Planning Toolkit contains helpful information about the NDIS and a handy pre-planning checklist. Pick up your copy at our Hillcrest office or contact **MS Assist** to request a copy.

4



Think about goals that expand your world

Perhaps you'd like to try a new sport, or join a club or group. You might even be thinking about getting a job, starting your own business, or moving out of home.

Come up with two goals for the next year, and one or two long-term goals to include in your plan. This will allow you and your planner to prepare for any future needs you may have that will require funding and resources.

5



Decide how you will manage your NDIS funding

There are three ways you can manage the money in your NDIS plan, and it is important you decide which will work best for you before your planning meeting as this will be included in your plan.

- **Agency Managed** – less hassle but less choice
- **Self-Managed** – more hassle but more choice
- **Plan Managed** – less hassle and more choice.

Plan Management cannot be denied to any participant/nominee who asks for it. If you choose this management option, you will be provided additional funds to support this, on top of your regular plan funds.

For more information about these NDIS funding management options see our helpful hints on page 7, or contact our NDIS team via **MS Assist**.

9



Join a peer support group, or online community

We understand that sometimes it can be helpful to talk to others who are going through the same experiences as you.

There are a lot of great Facebook groups you can join to find out more about the NDIS and communicate with others who are also going through the same changes and experiences. If you would prefer to meet with people face-to-face there are also many groups meeting across the state.

The MS Society's MS Peer Support program coordinates support groups all over SA and Darwin, as well as Facebook support groups for people with MS and their families/carers.

For more information or to join our online support groups contact **MS Assist**.

10



Write up two weekly calendars

Prepare a calendar of your current activities and how your life looks now, followed by a calendar of how you would like your life to look if you had the funding you need.

Give a copy of each to your planner.

Upcoming community events



Join a Peer Support Group and talk to others who understand

A Peer Support Group is a gathering of people with MS with the purpose of providing support to each other and sharing information by:

- learning more about MS
- sharing feelings and experiences
- obtaining accurate information
- providing an opportunity to talk through problems or choices being faced
- listening to others who share similar feelings and experiences
- helping others through the sharing of ideas and information
- knowing they are not alone.

Facebook online peer support groups

My Society

An online Facebook group for people living with multiple sclerosis in SA and NT. To protect the privacy of My Society members, this is a private place to chat where only people within the group are able to read the posts.

If you would like to join the group, please send an email to request membership to msassist@ms.asn.au

My Society – Family and friends

A Facebook group for family, friends and carers of people living with MS.

This is a private place to chat, share information, and connect with others who are supporting someone with MS.

It has been created, and is administered by the MS Society of SA & NT.

If you would like to join the group, please request membership at www.facebook.com/groups/0388437131394906

For more information on MS Peer Support please contact **MS Assist** on **1800 812 311** or msassist@ms.asn.au

Information sessions 2018

Continence workshop – Mount Gambier

When: Wednesday 16 May, 11am–1pm

Where: Lakes Resort Conference Room, 17 Lake Terrace West, Mount Gambier

Cost: Free to people with MS and their family/carer

RSVP by: Monday 7 May

Learn and develop strategies to manage continence when undertaking daily activities – at home, at work/study, for travel and in the community.

This workshop will discuss the impact of continence issues, the various ways to manage/reduce this impact and how to access the resources/help needed.



Month of Mindfulness

When: Thursday 17, 24 & 31 May, and 7 June, 4.15pm–6.15pm

Where: Mitcham Cultural Village Hall, 103C Princes Road, Mitcham

Cost: Free to people with MS and their family/carer

RSVP by: Monday 7 May

OR Alternate Cumberland Park location

When: Saturday 26 May, 10am–4pm

Where: Cumberland Park Community Centre, 388–390 Goodwood Road, Cumberland Park

RSVP by: Monday 14 May

Learn the ongoing benefits of mindfulness when managing modern living and chronic health conditions. Mindfulness brings a kind and gentle attitude toward oneself and others. These workshops aim to help people manage stress, anxiety and pain; to reduce the impact of MS symptoms/disability; and to improve relationships with others.

To find out more or to secure your spot in any of our information sessions or Come 'n' Try days, please contact **MS Assist** on **1800 812 311** or at msassist@ms.asn.au

August



Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

28	29	01	02	03	04	05
06	07	08	09	10	11	12 <i>International Youth Day</i>
13	14 <i>Continence Workshop - Hillcrest</i>	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	01	02

Notes

May

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
30	01	02	03	04	05	06
07	08	09	10	11	12 <i>International Nurse's Day</i>	13 <i>Mothers' Day</i>
14	15 <i>Int. Day of Families</i>	16	17 <i>Month of Mindfulness Session - Mitcham</i>	18	19	20
	<i>Continence Workshop - Hillcrest</i>	<i>Continence Workshop - Mt Gambier</i>				
21	22	23	24 <i>Month of Mindfulness Session - Mitcham</i>	25	26 <i>Month of Mindfulness Session - Cumberland Park</i>	27 <i>Reconciliation Week Starts</i>
28	29	30 <i>World MS Day</i>	31 <i>Month of Mindfulness Session - Mitcham</i>	01	02	03

Appointments

Date / / Time : am/pm

Date / / Time : am/pm

Date / / Time : am/pm

Date / / Time : am/pm

Date / / Time : am/pm

Date / / Time : am/pm

Date / / Time : am/pm

Date / / Time : am/pm

Date / / Time : am/pm

June



Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

28	29	30	31	01	02	03
04	05 <i>NDIS planning for your Review Info Session - Northern Adelaide</i>	06	07 <i>NDIS planning - Northern Adelaide Mindfulness Session - Mitcham</i>	08	09	10
11 <i>Queen's Birthday - Public Holiday</i>	12	13 <i>Continence Workshop - Hillcrest</i>	14	15	16	17
18	19 <i>Parenting Workshop</i>	20	21 <i>International Day of Yoga</i>	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	01

Notes

July

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
25	26	27	28	29	30	01
02	03	04	05	06	07	08 <i>NAIDOC Week starts</i>
09	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 <i>Continence Workshop - Hillcrest</i>	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	01	02	03	04	05

Appointments

Date / / Time : am/pm

Date / / Time : am/pm

Date / / Time : am/pm

Date / / Time : am/pm

Date / / Time : am/pm

Peer Support calendar

Peer Support Groups meet in the following areas:

Region	When	Location	Contact
Adelaide Hills – Mount Barker	3rd Monday of each month, 6.30pm	Auchendarroch House, Mount Barker	David 0410 451 301
Barossa	3rd Thursday of each month, 11am	Tanunda/Nuriootpa	Penny 0488 952 211
City-based for workers	2nd weekend of each month (alternating Friday night/ Saturday brunch)	Various city locations	Jess 0403 155 696
Clovelly Park	4th Friday of each month, 12pm	Tonsley Hotel	Christine Sutherland (08) 8276 3779
Darwin	Various times	Various venues	Sarah 0439 885 604
Fleurieu	Random Tuesdays, 12.30pm	Rotation of various Fleurieu eateries	Jill 0428 843 327
Gawler	2nd Monday of each month, 10am	Gawler Women's Health Centre	Helen Hoppmann 0403 295 348
Gawler Evening Group	Various times	Various venues	Helen 0403 295 348
Hard Yakkas (Salisbury)	Last Thursday of each month, 12pm	Sabine's Cafe & Bakehouse, Parabanks shopping centre	Tallia Coulter 0403 766 157
Kapunda	2nd Thursday of each month, 6.30pm	Various venues	Pauline 0427 010 754
Kensington (overcoming MS Group)	3rd Monday of each month, 6.30pm	Various venues in Norwood area	Pam Schartner (08) 8331 9360
Modbury	Last Tuesday of each month, 10am	Independent Living Centre, Gilles Plains	Gary Griffiths (08) 8263 7760
Mount Gambier	1st Friday of each month, 12pm	The Western Tavern, Mount Gambier	Gwenda (08) 8723 0098 0448 768 504
Noarlunga	1st & 3rd Thursday of each month, 12.30pm	Various lunch venues	Jude Brown (08) 8322 5441
Port Pirie	2nd Wednesday of each month, 12pm	Port Pirie Football Club, Port Pirie	Anne 0448 321 610
Riverland	1st Tuesday of each month, 10am	The Big River Golf Club, Berri, and other venues	Crystal 0418 690 013
South East Support Group	3rd Thursday of each month, 10.30am	The Avenue Inn, 17 Fourth Avenue, Narcoorte	Kay Cavill 0407 615 118
Strathalbyn Coffee Group	2nd Wednesday of each month, 11am	Victoria Hotel, Strathalbyn	Samantha 0410 582 269
Tailem Bend	Wednesdays, mid-monthly	Various venues	Sue Griffiths (08) 8572 3914
Under 35s (and a bit older)	2nd Monday of each month, 6.30pm	Various venues, north of the city	Mary-Anne (08) 7002 6500
Western Suburbs	Last Tuesday of each month, 10am	Plank Kitchen & Bar, Glenelg North	Enza 0433 972 312

Research is #bringinguscloser to ending MS

World MS Day 2018



Managing the mental health impact of MS

Source: MS Research Australia

People with MS are more likely to experience depression and/or anxiety than people without MS, and so finding ways to understand what leads to these symptoms and how best to manage them is crucial.

Many people with chronic illnesses, including MS, experience physical and mental health issues at a higher rate than the rest of the population. Dr Lisa Grech and her colleagues from the University of Melbourne have examined what methods people with MS use to

cope with and accept their diagnosis and how this affects their overall mental health. The team surveyed 107 Australians with MS and looked specifically at their coping strategies. The results are soon to be published in the International Journal of MS Care.

Everyone with MS deals with their diagnosis differently, and everyone experiences MS differently. But this research looking at different coping strategies has shown that some styles of coping are associated with better mental health outcomes than others.

Examples of coping strategies include, seeking social support, venting of emotions, denial, humour, substance abuse, and acceptance. In this study

the team researched the participants coping styles to see how it related to their symptoms of depression, stress and anxiety.

They found that people who accepted their diagnosis, made efforts to do something about their diagnosis, used restraint (i.e. not acting too soon) and used social support to cope had lower levels of depression. People who reported that they vented their emotions and disengaged behaviourally (for example withdrawing from efforts to deal with the situation and giving up on goals) had higher levels of depression.

When it came to the severity and frequency of stress the researchers



found that acceptance strategies or strategies where people accept and acknowledge that it is a stressful situation led to better outcomes. Whereas venting of emotions were statistically associated with more frequent stress. Strategies known as mental disengagement, where people use a variety of activities to distract them from thinking about stress, actually led to more frequent stress.

Denial and venting were linked to more severe stress, with those using venting strategies three times more likely to experience more severe stress and those in denial more than 96 times more likely to experience more severe stress.

The researchers also identified that people who used a growth mindset, i.e. actively trying to see things in a more positive light, experienced less anxiety.

This research indicates that the coping strategies used by people with MS are closely linked to their mental health. It suggests that developing interventions that health professionals can use to assist people with MS to modify their coping strategies may prove beneficial for mental health outcomes and quality of life. For example, interventions aimed at enhancing disease acceptance and behavioural strategies targeting personal growth could improve mood and anxiety, and reduce stress.

It is important that if you are, or think you might be experiencing some of these symptoms that you seek professional help, as there are interventions that can help. Focusing on managing the physical side of MS is important, but equally important is recognising and treating the great impact it has on mental health as well.

Research funded by MS Research Australia

New ways to help people with MS combat heat related fatigue

Dr Ollie Jay

Recently, Dr Jay has shown that if certain parts of the body are cooled, the sensation of fatigue can be reduced, allowing physical activity in the heat to be performed for longer periods of time. In this project he aims to build on these findings and develop simple and novel interventions for preventing heat-related fatigue in people with MS.

Electrical stimulation on swallowing disorders in MS

Dr Hans Bogaardt

A small randomised controlled trial will determine if neuromuscular electrical stimulation helps improve swallowing in adults with MS. The results of this pilot study will help the researchers decide if larger trials are needed, and could help determine future treatments to help with swallowing in people with MS.

Online mindfulness for people with MS

Ms Amy Sesel

This study will determine if fatigue, pain, depression and anxiety experienced by people with MS can be reduced through a web based psychological program. Focus groups will be conducted to determine what the psychological needs of people with MS are. Based on these results a program will be developed and then evaluated for effectiveness.

Improving the response to trips and slips in people with MS

Professor Stephen Lord

This pilot study will examine the relationship between balance recovery skill and falls history in people with MS, and assess the feasibility and potential effectiveness of a reactive step training program as a fall-prevention strategy for people with MS.

For more information on these research projects and others currently funded by MS Research Australia, visit their website: www.msra.org.au

What's on in SA & NT

Join us for this year's very special World MS Day event as we turn the Adelaide Entertainment Centre red on 30 May starting from 11am!

Help us celebrate the theme of Research, with a focus on wellness.

Come along and listen to key MS researchers speak, and meet valuable people and organisations who specialise in helping people with MS and other disabilities to live well.

Enjoy a delicious catered lunch and prepare to be entertained throughout the afternoon with live performances, and onsite wellness workshops.

Let's bring our MS community together to celebrate Research **#bringinguscloser** to ending MS.

Keep an eye out on our Facebook page and website for more details.

Diving in for MS

Another MS Mighty Swim has come and gone, and again we have been overwhelmed by the incredible support we have received from our 14 teams who took the time to come out and push their bodies to the limits – all to raise funds to support people living with multiple sclerosis in SA and NT.

This year we had a total of **331 participants jump in the pool across the weekend to raise over \$90,000!!**

This is the first time the event has been run by the SA staff after a number of years where MSWA ran the event. We have been extremely humbled by all of the positive feedback received from our participants and the City of Unley.

MS Society of SA & NT CEO Andrew Ellis said, “I was thrilled to be part of this year’s MS Mighty Swim, swimming more than a few laps myself – with my sons joining me in the water too! It is so humbling to see the passion and contributions of so many who fundraised in support of people with MS.”

“I really enjoyed meeting a number of our supporters and clients at the event and look forward to next year.”

The event kicked off at Unley Swimming Centre on Saturday 10 February and continued through the night until midday the following afternoon (Sunday 11 February).

Our starting swimmers from each team, hit the water promptly at 12.15pm and the race was on to take home the coveted title of the team to swim the most laps in 24 hours.

The *Atlantis Frogs* swam the most laps over the weekend, finishing on

a huge 699 laps. It was an extremely close finish though with *Pedare* finishing only 25 laps behind with 674 laps, and the *Kingfishers* finishing with 654 laps.

We had a number of new teams get involved this year, as well as many familiar faces – some of whom have been with us for over a decade!

One of our long standing teams, *Team Hughesy*, took part in their eighth consecutive Mighty Swim this year, and raised over \$3,500 for MS! Their team leader, Anthony Hughes, was diagnosed with MS in November 2010 and has become a dedicated swimmer – swimming multiple times a week – ever since.

As a jogger and rugby player prior to being diagnosed, swimming was the best way for Anthony to maintain his physical health now that he was living with a right foot drop and balance issues.

“My sister came along to support me at an information session for the Newly Diagnosed hosted by the MS Society, eight years ago, and heard about the Mighty Swim,” Anthony said.

“When she suggested the idea I thought ‘no way, I’m not interested’, but she said ‘no, we’re doing it’ and that was that.”

Now in their eighth year, *Team Hughesy* has 24 members in their team, most of whom have been swimming with Anthony since the very beginning. The team has their own Facebook page which they use to gather sponsors for their Hughesy raffle which raises approximately \$1,000 a year for the Mighty Swim.



Anthony is a big believer in ‘if you don’t ask, you don’t get’ and believes a short conversation can go a long way.

“It’s all about those 15 second conversations with people. I had a 15-minute conversation with a woman I met at uni four or five years ago and she ended up swimming for us and raising \$500 that year,” Anthony said.

“Communicate with people and see how your life changes and what can happen – it’s important to be positive.”

Our attendees were treated to an array of activities across the event. Costume hour was a huge success, as well as the ever popular Sunday morning yoga session. There was plenty for the kids with a blow up waterslide and a dedicated pool. A pink blow-up flamingo was the star of the show though as it swam its own lap for MS and was then auctioned off to two lucky winners.

Keep a look out on the MS Society Facebook page and our website for details on next year’s event!





Amira's laughing her way through MS



Newly diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, only seven months ago, Amira understands how those first few months can change your life. But her positive outlook has led her to reassess her life goals and pursue a new career doing what she loves—while making sure to continue laughing along the way.

Amira was in her early 20s, and a soon-to-be university graduate when she was first diagnosed with MS in July 2017. For years she had been living with fatigue, muscle pain and many other symptoms with no explanation, but it was the day after her final university exam that everything was finally made clear.

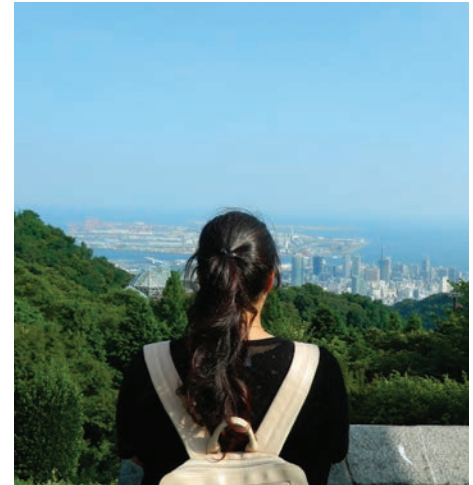
Nine years' prior, doctors had found a scar behind Amira's left eye which was initially dismissed. After years of concerning symptoms, Amira underwent test after test for a number of different illnesses as doctors began to eliminate the other alternatives one by one. It wasn't until her doctor finally prescribed an MRI that they found extensive scarring of Amira's brain. This ultimately led to doctors discovering that she had been living with MS for the past nine years.

A rollercoaster of emotions soon flooded Amira, as she was experiencing both a sense of relief and a sense of loss. "While the diagnosis was overwhelming at first, I was also relieved to finally have insight in to the symptoms that I had carried for so long without answers," Amira said.

For the first month after her diagnosis, Amira couldn't help but feel grief for the life she once knew and would find herself crying often. Days before her diagnosis, she was looking forward to graduating from her degree and following her dream of teaching young boys and girls to speak English in Japan. However, her diagnosis now meant that she would have to reassess the life plans she had already set in motion and ultimately let go of her dream to teach overseas.

Amira lives by the philosophy that when faced with a tough situation you can either laugh and accept it, or you can cry. "One day I was talking to my best friend about my MS diagnosis and she joked that if I ever needed a wheelchair I should have large flames painted on the side. This is when I realised that I could laugh and make jokes about it," Amira said.

"Now, I find that too much sympathy can make me feel like there is something wrong with me; but making jokes and laughing about my diagnosis makes me feel normal."



After meeting with her neurologist, Amira was introduced to the MS Society. She was assigned to one of our MS nurses who provided her with the support and information she needed about the services the MS Society provides.

"I attended an information session for the newly diagnosed, provided by the MS Society, which gave me advice about the supports and grants available to me," Amira said.

"This was by far the most valuable service provided to me in the early days of my diagnosis as I was finding it difficult to find the answers I needed from the internet. The information session provided much needed clarity."

The MS Support Facebook group has also allowed Amira the ability to chat to likeminded peers. She now has advice and support from others with MS at her fingertips, allowing her to get the answers she needs quickly.

Today, she is focusing on studying to become a pastry chef, and researching government grants to begin her new career. Amira's advice to other people newly diagnosed with MS is "if you need to cry, cry – but not for too long. Make sure to focus on the good parts; and definitely seek help when you need it."

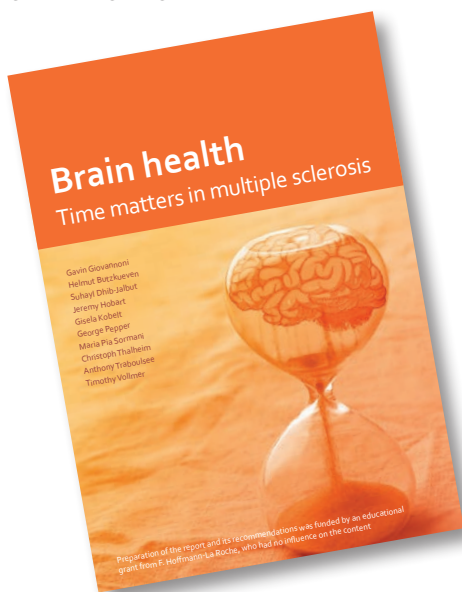
If you are newly diagnosed with MS like Amira, and need support, please contact **MS Assist** on **1800 812 311** or at **msassist@ms.asn.au** to find out more about your support options.

A healthy brain, the key to living well with MS

Source: MS Brain Health's report *Brain health: time matters in multiple sclerosis*

Having a healthy brain that functions well is important for people with multiple sclerosis, and by making positive lifestyle choices people with MS can help to keep their brains as healthy as possible.

A group of international MS professionals with insight into living with MS, have developed a short guide to ensure that people with MS understand how to embrace a brain-healthy lifestyle and refer to their health care professionals to provide support and monitoring. The guide aims to highlight and educate people with MS about the importance of making positive lifestyle choices to maintain good ongoing brain health.



Here are six positive steps people with MS can take to keep their brains as healthy as possible, whatever the MS diagnosis.

Keep as active as you can

Higher levels of aerobic fitness are associated with faster information processing and preserved brain tissue volume. This suggests that being as active as possible may help to preserve brain health in people with MS.



Keep your weight under control

Losing weight into the healthy range and improving the lipid profile could protect against relapses in MS.

Keep your mind active

Education, reading, hobbies and artistic or creative pastimes help to protect against cognitive problems in MS when pursued over a lifetime.

Avoid smoking

Cigarette smoking is associated with decreased brain volume in people with MS, as well as with higher relapse rates, increased disability progression, more cognitive problems and reduced survival compared with not smoking.

Watch how much you drink

Unsafe levels of alcohol should be avoided.

Continue taking other medicines that your doctor has prescribed

If you have other diseases, be responsible for monitoring and managing them, including taking any prescribed medications.

Conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease and diabetes can worsen the MS disease course.

These recommendations, and more can be viewed in the report *Brain health: time matters in multiple sclerosis*. Copies are available at the MS Society or you can view the resource at www.msbrainhealth.org

For advice and support regarding positive lifestyle choices, visit our MS nurses at our Hillcrest office, or contact them via **MS Assist** on **1800 812 311** or at msassist@ms.asn.au

Employment solutions



Steve takes back his job independence

Written by Peter Gdodakis

Lauren, Site Coordinator at Multiple Solutions, says that despite the barriers confronting Steve*, he was determined to return to work.

A traumatic brain injury affected Steve's memory, his ability to focus, and his mobility and balance. Despite the setback, Lauren says Steve was always friendly and had a smile on his face, and gives him enormous credit for what he has achieved and how far he has come since his accident.

When Lauren first met Steve, she didn't know which employer would be able to provide the workplace support he needed. Prior to his injury Steve was a qualified motor mechanic, and expressed an interest in returning to a similar type of work environment.

Lauren managed to secure him a work experience opportunity at SouthLink. Although it was only temporary, Steve was able to perform a trades assistant role during his time there.

Lauren says she looked for other work experience opportunities, but knowing how much Steve enjoyed it at SouthLink, she continued to maintain contact with the bus service operator. In January last year, Steve was offered a permanent position with SouthLink, and commenced under the supported wage scheme.

Lauren says in a relatively short period, Steve's working capacity compared to an able-bodied worker had gone from 50 percent to 70 percent. "We provided him with the opportunity to gain some additional skills such as a Test and Tag Certification and a Forklift License to help him increase his work skills and overall capacity as an employee. I also continued to provide Steve with on the job support, with face to face fortnightly appointments in the workplace," Lauren says.

"He now performs an all-rounder role, and I have no reason to believe his work capacity shouldn't be assessed at 90 percent or more, next time around."

Steve also didn't need a support worker and was very committed to

his role. "He had such a fantastic supervisor who was aware of his injury. They really went above and beyond to support him, and once he got the job he really shone – he learnt and adapted very quickly," Lauren says.

Steve now no longer receives ongoing support from Multiple Solutions, and is an independent worker. "It's fantastic to see how far Steve has come and how happy he is. He no longer receives the Disability Support Pension, and has been able to keep and maintain his home and car which he had prior to the accident," Lauren says.

Lauren plans to keep in touch with Steve to check on his progress, and is confident that he will be with SouthLink for the rest of his life.

If you are eager to get back into the workforce, like Steve, but are finding it hard to secure employment, please visit our incredible staff at one of our eight local Multiple Solutions offices or call **1800 053 154** for more information.

**Names have been changed to protect the privacy of our clients*



Above: Steve with manager and Lauren.

Visit us

Workplace Solutions

Do you know someone whose health impacts on their work, or whose work impacts on their health?

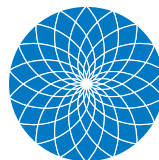
Multiple Solutions offer the Workplace Solutions Work Assist program which specifically provides workplace support for those living with a health condition or injury, are already employed for at least eight hours per week and who wish to sustain their existing employment.

The Workplace Solutions team has been providing this type of service and support to people with a disability since 1993. Over the last five years, we have successfully supported over 145 people with a disability to remain in work, enabling the participants to maintain their dignity, and continue their independence and economic contribution to society.

With qualified and highly experienced specialist staff, the Workplace Solutions team provide support to Australian residents and citizens. Support may include:

- counselling, and providing emotional and family support for personal and career concerns, diagnoses and changes to health, and assisting with disclosure
 - administering Work Based Personal Assistance (WBPA) to assist personal care needs
 - identifying and implementing specific equipment or worksite modifications
 - allocating vocational coaches to assist with learning work tasks, developing routine and independence
 - providing advice regarding the Employment Assistance Fund.
- For more information about the Work Assist program visit jobaccess.gov.au or email the Workplace Solutions team at wpsolutions@ms.asn.au
- If you choose to email the Workplace Solutions team, please include the following key information to enable an appropriate response to your enquiry:
- full name and date of birth
 - town or suburb that you live in
 - town or suburb that you work in
 - reliable contact telephone number and best time to call you to discuss your enquiry
 - indication of your workplace needs and/or health concerns.
- advocating and negotiating for reasonable adjustments in the workplace to accommodate disability including, utilising Job Access
 - increasing employer awareness/ education and negotiating of suitable duties
 - monitoring progress with health/ fatigue management and transition to 'normal' work arrangements
 - administering referrals to allied health providers and support services for improved health management

multiple
solutions



Brighton

7A Sturt Road
Brighton SA 5048

T (08) 8198 1400

Christies Beach

Unit 1/111 Beach Road
Christies Beach SA 5165

T (08) 8392 0100

Hillcrest

341 North East Road
Hillcrest SA 5086

T (08) 7002 6500

Modbury

31 Smart Road
Modbury SA 5092

T (08) 8203 6600

Morphett Vale

Shop 3/204 Main South Road
Morphett Vale SA 5162

T (08) 8187 2100

Salisbury

6–8 John Street
Salisbury SA 5108

T (08) 8256 3708

Woodville

51 Woodville Road
Woodville SA 5011

T (08) 8345 8700

Torrensville

130 Henley Beach Road
Torrensville SA 5031

T (08) 8164 1550

We're fundraising with *entertainment*



To support us go to: www.entbook.com.au/161y000

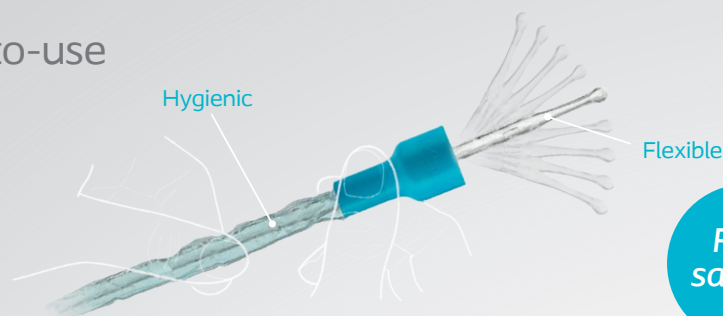


OR



Still Only
\$70
giving you over
\$20,000
of value!

Discover our new easy-to-use *catheter*



Introducing SpeediCath® Flex

SpeediCath Flex has a dry-sleeve so it can be gripped and handled cleanly and hygienically. The 44cm catheter is flexible, making it easier to handle, and enabling safe and gentle passage through the urethra. SpeediCath Flex has non-medical packaging that is re-closable allowing for discrete and hygienic disposal.

Coming soon! Request a free sample from the 23rd of October

 1800 653 317

 www.coloplast.com.au/Flex



SpeediCath® Flex

The Coloplast logo is a registered trademark of Coloplast A/S. © 2017-08 CON606. All rights reserved Coloplast Pty Ltd, PO Box 240, Mount Waverley, VIC 3149 Australia.