

Impact

Empowering people to live well.
Supporting research.



HELPING HEATHER

You're giving people like Heather support for life.

Since the day Heather came to the MS Society when she was diagnosed with MS at the age of 28, we – with your help – have been by Heather's side for almost 30 years.

When Heather was diagnosed with MS in the 90s, she had no idea what was going to happen. She didn't know much about her condition or what her future would hold, and

information wasn't as easy to access at the time. The uncertainty made her new diagnosis even more daunting.

When she was told that she'd have to start self-injecting treatment to manage her MS, she was scared, just like any of us would be. That's when she went to see the MS nurses at the MS Society for help.

"I've been coming here for what seems like ages. The nurses got rid of a lot of the stigma and fears about MS and explained

a little bit about it, and how it affects you. They've been really great and helpful. At times I'd be lost without them. When you start a new treatment, the nurses just sit you down and talk to you about how it's going to affect you. Whenever I've had an issue with my medication, I ring them." Heather says.

As her condition has progressed, Heather has noticed her symptoms affect her more and more. Cognitive difficulties mean

that she has to avoid multitasking, because she finds herself getting confused easily. She also lives with fatigue, which means she needs to rest regularly and sometimes doing anything at all is impossible.

Heather uses our physiotherapy and hydrotherapy services – supported by you. Exercise can help people who have trouble walking, like Heather, to improve muscle weakness and balance. Exercise also helps

to improve other MS symptoms like fatigue.

Physiotherapy has made a big difference to Heather's MS symptoms, and she now has exercises that she can do at home in between visits with her MS physiotherapist.

"They've been really understanding which is good, because I get a bit confused and they've been very patient. They are there, if I've got an issue I know where to go to," Heather says.



Welcome to your bi-annual supporter newsletter.

Our focus for the 2019/20 financial year is to empower more people affected by MS to live well by providing a wider range of services in more locations.

We are proud to have a range of physiotherapy services available, to

suit every lifestyle and individual needs. We are now holding exercise groups and hydrotherapy groups, every week, in 11 locations around South Australia.

Doctors and scientists are still searching for the cause and cure for multiple sclerosis, and are making discoveries every day. That's why we are passionate about supporting research, and your support helps us

continue to contribute to MS Research Australia every year.

We rely on your generous contribution to help us provide more essential services to people with MS, and contribute to MS research. We couldn't do it without you!

I encourage you to take the time to read this newsletter to learn more about how your valuable support helps us to

empower people with MS to live well, while supporting research.

Christine Hahn
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Note from the CEO



Your support is helping people adjust to diagnosis

Your support is giving people newly diagnosed with multiple sclerosis the tools and resources they need to confront MS head on. A new Wellness program has given people going through the overwhelming process of a new diagnosis, education about a range of different lifestyle strategies they can use to treat symptoms of MS.

On average, every week in South Australia and Northern Territory two people are given the life changing news that they are living with MS. When a person is newly diagnosed with MS, early prevention is key to slow down progression and to keep relapses to a minimum. Through the Wellness program, you're empowering people to proactively manage their MS symptoms within 12 months of diagnosis.

Your generosity has connected people with key health and wellness specialists to give them practical advice in the areas of diet, fitness, stress management and fatigue management. You've given people the tools to have a long-term impact on their wellbeing, and to live their best life possible with MS.

This new program compliments bi-annual newly diagnosed information sessions – supported by you through the MS Society – which connect people with a neurologist and MS specialist nurses to support people to understand their new diagnosis, and the strides made in MS research.

With your continued support, we hope to deliver this vital health and wellness education to people newly diagnosed with MS in more locations across metropolitan and regional South Australia, and the Northern Territory.

Because of you

Thanks to your generous support, we have purchased a bladder scanner that will help our continence nurse, Amanda to provide the best service to people living with bladder problems.

About 20-40% of people with MS experience bladder-emptying problems. This means the bladder doesn't empty completely. People try to go to the toilet, but nothing happens; or the urine flow stops and starts. If people can't empty their bladder completely this can lead to urinary incontinence, urinary tract infections and potential kidney problems.

A bladder scanner is an essential piece of technology that identifies if there is any leftover urine in the bladder. The scan is non-invasive and provides a quick reading, using an ultrasound probe above the lower abdomen.

Thank you for giving people with MS the tools to better understand their symptoms, and for helping Amanda to work out a plan to manage people's bladder issues at home, in relationships and out in the community.



Your gift is supporting vital therapy programs

With your help, the MS Society has recently introduced a popular new Falls Prevention program. This program helps people with MS living with balance and walking issues, to reduce their risk of falls and injuries.

Your support has helped the MS Society to partner with a specialist neuro-physiotherapist to run six-week courses for people living with MS, to help improve their symptoms and reduce their risk of falling. In the course, clients are taken through exercises tailored to their abilities, and given practical tips and information they can use at home when the course finishes.

Many people with MS are prone to falling because of symptoms like problems with balance and coordination, vision, and weak muscles.

Often people can even be mistaken for being drunk when loss of balance causes them to stumble. With no warning, falling can leave people feeling embarrassed and can result in injuries.

Falls usually happen when people are just doing everyday things like walking, standing up and turning. But we know that regular exercise and physiotherapy can help to improve balance and coordination in people living with MS by strengthening weak muscles and improving coordination.

So far, you've helped the MS Society to run 13 of these courses in locations all over metropolitan and regional South Australia, with about 80 people with MS taking part and seeing amazing results. Thank you!



MS Readathon returns!

This August, the MS Readathon re-launched in South Australia and Northern Territory for the first time since 2011!

Many of us have fond memories of taking part in the MS Readathon, and this year your children and grandchildren had the chance to join in on the fun! This incredible event encourages kids all over Australia to read as many books as they can throughout the month of August, to raise funds for families affected by MS.

Thanks to overwhelming support from participants and donors we had over 1,600 kids register and raise over **\$90,000** for families living with MS in South Australia and Northern Territory! See you next year!

Leave a lasting impact

Leave a gift in your Will to the MS Society SA/NT and help us continue to give hope to thousands of people living with multiple sclerosis in South Australia and Northern Territory.

If you have already remembered the MS Society SA/NT in your Will or are considering doing so, we would appreciate you letting us know so we can thank you personally and plan for the future.

Call (08) 7002 6500 or email bequest@ms.asn.au.



RON'S DETERMINED

Thanks to your support, Ron will keep doing what he loves.

As an avid bush walker for many years before his diagnosis, Ron has continued to travel all over the world walking massive trails for months at a time. His MS symptoms affect his legs and his balance, but Ron is determined to keep on walking for as long as he can.

Walking an average of 20 kilometres a day, Ron says his left leg has gradually weakened and he finds that the longer and further he walks, the more fatigued it gets.

"My side effects make me slower, because I'm trying to keep the

strength going all day I tend to stop more often, and for slightly longer periods to recover and to keep the fatigue down." Ron says.

During a walk in Kangaroo Island, Ron lost his balance and fell three times during the walk, and twice in the campsite. He injured his leg so badly that he had to be taken off the walk, and that's when he realised that he needed to do something to help improve his balance.

"I decided time was enough – I did have knowledge of the MS Society, I knew there were nurses here. I thought if I want to do this walk, and next year's Spain walk, I had to do something about my

balance and find out why my leg was getting so bad," Ron says.

A couple of weeks later, Ron shuffled into the MS Society office in Adelaide with stitches in his knees. He sat down with an MS nurse, and they talked through all of the symptoms he was experiencing. He was invited to attend one of the six-week Falls

Prevention courses – supported by you.

"One of my biggest worries from this particular walking trip is I'm sleeping in a tent and I struggle to crawl out of the tent and stand up." Ron says.

During the Falls Prevention course the neuro-physiotherapist, took the group through exercises and practical tips they could practice

for the next six weeks, and at home once the course had finished. The physio also spent one-on-one time with Ron, practicing how to get out of a tent safely on his next walk.

"It's been very much eye opening, I've learnt a lot. Nothing can cure it, but hopefully I can use some fundamentals that have now been given to me," Ron says.



Help us keep costs down

Receive *Impact* by email. We'll spend less on paper and postage and more on vital services supporting people living with MS.

Email us at communication@ms.asn.au and we'll add your email address to our records. Remember to include your full name, suburb and donor number if possible. All of your other details will remain unchanged.



South Australia & Northern Territory

Find us online



CONNECTING WITH US

HEAD OFFICE

341 North East Road
Hillcrest SA 5086

T (08) 7002 6500

E communication@ms.asn.au

W www.ms.asn.au

PO Box 377,
Salisbury South
DC SA 5106

DISCLAIMER

Material published in *Impact* may not be reproduced in any form without permission from the MS Society SA/NT. MS Society SA/NT is committed to the protection of private information. Our Privacy Policy is available at www.ms.asn.au. If you would prefer not to receive mail from us, please let us know.

