

# Impact

Empowering people to live well.  
Supporting research.

## GRAHAM IS TAKING CONTROL



**Thanks to your support, Graham is living well with multiple sclerosis.**

Graham noticed something wasn't quite right when he was having issues with walking and started to feel a tingling sensation in his hands and feet. His mother was very sick at the time, and it was on the day of her funeral that he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

"I've got an engineering background, and I thought I will never be able to do my trade again. Never. Impossible.

I will never be able to stand on my feet for eight hours a day, or work in the heat," Graham says.

Many people like Graham find their symptoms flare up when it gets hot, so problems with walking and cognition can be intensified in the heat. Graham can also sometimes lose his train of thought mid-sentence, and at one point he was so fatigued he couldn't get out of bed for a full week.

Graham knew it was time to make a change; to take back control of his body—that's

where the MS Society stepped in. Graham started working with our specialist physiotherapists, and attending weekly gym and hydrotherapy sessions—supported by you!

Regular exercise can improve strength and endurance to help people with walking and balance, and can relieve other symptoms like MS fatigue. With your support, our physiotherapists have given Graham the tools and knowledge he needs to understand the positive impact exercise

can have on his body and his MS symptoms.

In addition to increasing his strength, Graham says our physiotherapists have taught him how to walk differently and how to use the stairs better. "The benefits go well beyond the hour session. From the moment you get out of bed, the extra strength of having a good night's sleep from exercising the day before helps you wake up more refreshed."

Graham says he has seen a dramatic change in his symptoms for the better, all thanks

to regular exercise and changes to his diet. He's now back at work, and walking up to 14 kilometres a day with not a walking stick in sight!

"I'm doing things which even some 'able-bodied' people would be struggling with, and I don't have MS on my side either. It's quite empowering."

Achievements like Graham's, would not be possible without your support. Thank you for supporting services that can change people's lives.



Welcome to the first edition of our new bi-annual supporter newsletter.

With your support over the past 12 months, we have been able to increase our services empowering people to live well with multiple sclerosis, as well as increasing our contribution to MS research.

## Note from the CEO

This has included increasing numbers of gym and hydrotherapy classes, expanding services for occupational therapy, and physiotherapy.

We have also added a new specialist continence nurse who will assist hundreds of our clients with the bladder and bowel concerns they face every day.

Each week, we meet two new South Australians diagnosed with MS

and we rely on your generous support so that nurses can provide them with information and education on the condition.

Your contribution has enabled us to support South Australian researchers on a world-first clinical trial to test whether vitamin D supplementation can prevent MS in those at risk of developing the disease.

Without your valuable contribution, we would not have been able to provide these services.

I encourage you to take the time to read this newsletter to learn more about how your financial support helps us to empower people with multiple sclerosis to live well, while supporting research.

**Andrew Ellis**  
Chief Executive Officer



## MS Mighty Swim

The MS Society's biggest annual fundraising event, the MS Mighty Swim was recently held at Unley Swimming Centre to raise vital funds for people living with multiple sclerosis.

Teams fundraised for months in the lead up to the big weekend, where they competed to swim the most laps in 24 hours. In its 14th year, about 300 people in 12 teams came out for a weekend of fun, and community spirit.

**Thanks to the generous support of participants and donors, the event raised more than \$106,000 for people living with MS in South Australia and Northern Territory!**

All money raised will help us provide essential services to people living with MS, and support research into improved treatments, a cause and a cure. See you next year!

# You're helping people take back their independence

Three out of four people with MS, live with bladder and bowel issues. Thanks to your compassionate support, people living with MS now have access to a brand new essential service with our new specialist continence nurse.

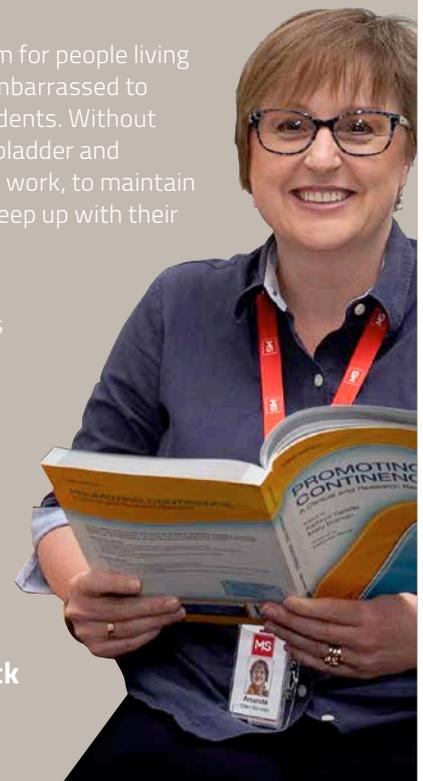
This new continence service will help people with MS who live with bladder and bowel issues to access support and management techniques to increase their confidence and help them get back out into the community. In its first year, the service has already connected 103 people with our specialist continence nurse.

Incontinence is the most common symptom for people living with MS, and can often leave people too embarrassed to leave the house in case of unexpected accidents. Without the right support, many people living with bladder and bowel issues lose the confidence to stay at work, to maintain relationships and make new ones, and to keep up with their daily activities.

With this new continence service, you are empowering people to live well with access to the right products, management tools, and specialist advice.

Our continence nurse can help people come up with a plan to manage their bladder and bowel issues at home, in relationships and out in the community.

**Your support makes this vital service possible and gives people with MS the confidence to take back their independence.**



## Your support is helping Lynette adjust to life with multiple sclerosis.

Growing up, Lynette was no stranger to MS. Her dad was diagnosed with MS when she was very young, and she grew up watching him slowly lose his ability to walk. She watched him go from walking stick, to crutches, to a wheelchair. So when

she was diagnosed with MS, she decided that wasn't going to be her life.

It took Lynette a while to come to terms with her diagnosis and to lean on the MS Society for help. "I personally found it difficult to attend MS workshops, because of my mindset.

This would be

acknowledging I had MS. I felt I shouldn't be there if I did go, because I would see people that were a lot worse than me," Lynette says.

"Since then I've had time to realise, I was so wrong. Everyone is at different levels of this chronic disease and everyone can do with as much assistance as possible."

One of the first signs of MS Lynette experienced was a loss of balance and difficulty walking. Many people experience balance problems such as tripping, unsteadiness, and weak legs as a symptom of MS. Often, people who have issues with balance can be confused as being drunk when they begin to stumble and trip.

For Lynette, balance has continued to be one of the major

symptoms she lives with every day. She has had to call on her neighbours, and even an ambulance, after falling off her bed during the early hours of the morning.

Lynette recently attended one of our new Balance and Mobility for Falls Prevention courses—supported by you. Since working with a specialist neuro-physiotherapist for six weeks, she has learned strategies to help minimise her risk of falling.

"I have a tendency to think I can walk really fast, but I can't. So I just think, I've got to stop and take it easy," Lynette says. She has also started wearing more supportive shoes and using a walking stick around the house—only when she needs it.

Lynette has built a relationship with MS nurse, Pamela after years of treatment. Pamela has helped to

show her how to safely administer her injections and calls her regularly to help with any concerns Lynette may have about her MS symptoms.

Lynette says she is amazed at how many treatments are available now, because of developments in MS research supported by generous donations.

"When I was first diagnosed there wasn't as much choice in medication as there is now. It's great for all the people that are being diagnosed now that they can have a far greater choice to suit their needs."

Now that Lynette is slowly coming to terms with the idea of her MS, she is keen to get more involved in MS Society activities like peer support groups, and hydrotherapy. You are giving people like Lynette the choice to access the tools they need to live their best life possible.



## Empowering Lynette

# Leave a lasting impact

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

If you have already generously included the MS Society in your Will, please do let us know so we can personally acknowledge your Gift.

For more information about leaving a Gift to the MS Society in your Will, please contact Kate Nixon on 08 7002 6500 or at [bequest@ms.asn.au](mailto:bequest@ms.asn.au).



South Australia &  
Northern Territory

# Your gift is supporting vital therapy programs



With your help, the MS Society has run physiotherapist-led hydrotherapy groups in Adelaide for years, with the aim of promoting fitness, mobility and community for people with multiple sclerosis. But with sessions exclusively run in Adelaide, people living with MS in regional areas were excluded from accessing a vital service.

Your support has helped the MS Society to expand our hydrotherapy program to regional South Australia! Thanks to you, we have partnered with Fleurieu Physiotherapy and Wellness (FWP) in Victor Harbor to offer our clients on the Fleurieu Peninsula weekly hydrotherapy classes with a physiotherapist.

FWP physiotherapist, Chloe says, "When working with people with MS, I find that people feel a lot safer in the water, because if they fall they only have to worry about getting their hair wet. The water gives them the confidence to do a bit more without the fear of falling."

"There is also the social side to the program which has been a big positive. This is a great program to encourage social interaction for those who may be feeling isolated."

People with MS can sometimes find that gym exercise is difficult to manage with their MS symptoms, but exercise is still vital for people to live well. Exercising in water is great for people who are sensitive to heat, and the water can be much easier to move in for those with muscle weakness.

Mark has attended our hydrotherapy program in Victor Harbor since it launched, and has noticed a real difference. "For me, by making this commitment to myself every week I really stick to it. I also go to the gym but since I've started this I've noticed a difference. I'm more flexible in my joints. The pool supports you with balance. It is relaxing but at the same time you can feel your body working," Mark says.

Hydrotherapy offers amazing physical and emotional benefits for people living with MS.

**Your gifts will help the MS Society to continue expanding our hydrotherapy programs to reach even more people living with MS.**

# You and MS Society SA/NT: supporting research

With your generous support, we were able to fulfil the second half of our vision and contribute over \$1.3million to MS research in 2018!

Thank you for making this possible!

There is currently no known cause or cure for multiple sclerosis, and while research has taken many strides in the past few decades to develop treatments for symptoms and disease progression, there is still more that needs to be done.

Your gift can help us contribute to MS Research Australia to fund essential Australian studies into the cause, cure and treatment of MS.

For MS research news and updates, visit MS Research Australia's website: [msra.org.au](http://msra.org.au).



South Australia & Northern Territory

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