



Life not limits



*Meet Shy Librarian, Elena.
Read more on page 24.*

Bulletin

Your MSWA Magazine

Birak | Summer 2025

mswa.org.au

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- Introducing Life not Limits Grant
- Founders Factory and MSWA join forces
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Life not limits

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Contact us

If you would like to comment on anything you read in this *Bulletin*, please email bulletin@mswa.org.au
For general feedback or complaints, please contact feedback@mswa.org.au

Editorial Working Group

Montana Moran, Tammie Chu and Belinda Sherry.

Contributors

Thank you to all our MSWA contributors from across our organisation, who take the time to share their knowledge and expertise for the benefit of our readers.

If there is a topic you would like to see included in our next edition, please email bulletin@mswa.org.au with your suggestion.

Client Engagement department

Our experienced teams will provide you with personalised support throughout your service journey with MSWA. Our trained staff will help you get the most out of your selected services.

For more information, please contact 9365 4888

Our services include:

- Counselling and Wellbeing
- Community Support & In-home Care
- Dietetics
- Occupational Therapy
- Outreach
- Physiotherapy
- Social Welfare
- Speech Pathology
- Nursing
- Support Coordination

Nursing support

Our Neurological Liaison Nurses are usually the first point of contact after the neurologist's diagnosis.
Community Nurse: 9365 4888
Monday to Friday (8.00am - 4.00pm)

Outreach at MSWA

If you live in Perth, Rockingham, Butler, Bunbury or Albany, and are interested in a trial to experience the Outreach community, get in touch via community.engagement@mswa.org.au

Employment Support

The MSWA Employment Support Service is the only specialist employment service for people living with multiple sclerosis and other neurological conditions in Western Australia. Our team can help you to stay in your current job or find employment in the open labour market.

Please call: 1300 865 209

[See all our supports and services at mswa.org.au](http://mswa.org.au)

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Welcome to Bulletin Birak 2025 editon

The Noongar Season 'Birak' is the fire season. The rain eases and the warm weather starts to take hold, but the afternoons are cooled by the sea breezes. Many fledglings are seen venturing out of their nests while reptiles begin to shed old skins to new ones.¹

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Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, MSWA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the many lands and language groups of Western Australia, and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay out respect to their Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

¹Reference: Edith Cowan University, Cultural Leadership: Noongar Six Seasons.



From our CEO *Melanie Kiely*

It's hard to believe we are already 'hurtling' our way towards Christmas. Time genuinely flies when you're busy and I have to remind myself to stop and be mindful - to enjoy spring, the sunshine and nature. It fills up your tank to keep going. I finally understand the expression my father always used to say, "Stop the world, I want to get off." Sometimes we just need to step out and catch our breath.

Since we last produced our Bulletin, we've had another MSWA Mega Home Lottery sell-out for the amazing Grand Prize Home located in Floreat. As we always say - this wouldn't be possible without you and the support of the entire Western Australian community. As the NDIS price reductions hit, we are in a unique position with our lottery. Sadly, other organisations do not have this and we're seeing an increasing number of providers going into voluntary administration or closing down.

The most recent was Therapy Focus, an organisation that has provided allied health services to West Australians living with disability for many years. Over the last 12 months, 350 community-based organisations have closed down or gone into voluntary administration. Many of these are charities that provide services to vulnerable communities that no one else will. The cost will ultimately be felt by the health system and taxpayers as hospital admissions increase and community services face growing pressure.

We again call on the federal government to provide interim relief to charities like these until they can implement the independent pricing review recommendations and pay-for-risk in terms of registration.



(L-R) Simon, Heather, Prithvi and Melanie at the MS Society SA & NT office.

Those organisations doing more and dealing with greater compliance complexity should be paid more. MSWA is a specialist provider and even we are not immune to cost and price reduction pressures. Our lottery funds can only go so far. We've identified this as an area of improvement and are currently exploring strategies with our Client Committee and working groups to ensure MSWA is sustainable for many years to come.

We continue to fly the flag in Canberra for appropriate funding for our neurological community - something I was heavily involved in with our national colleagues and Clients in September.

Talking about voluntary administration, it was very sad to see our sister society - MS Society SA & NT - enter into voluntary administration as a result of a number of factors, including recent employment contract allocations and pricing pressures. MSWA, due to our geographic proximity and expertise, has agreed to ensure continuity of services for Clients in the SA and the NT from 10 November 2025. We have received such a warm welcome from Clients in South Australia and the Northern Territory. As well as kind and supportive feedback from our Client community in WA.

I always knew what a warm and caring community we were, but to see it in action across the states has been truly heartwarming. Thank you. Read more about this change on page 6.

On another heartwarming note, following the sad loss of Ros Harman, our amazing team has been working with Ros' family and is delighted to announce the launch of the Life not Limits Grant in memory of Ros Harman - supporting Clients in their passion projects to live life, not limits!

If you have something ambitious you're aiming for, keep an eye out for the 2026 applications so you can stretch your limits in Ros' memory. More information about the grant on page 7.

During this period, we also held our Community and Client Forum, which was once again very well attended - both in person and online. I loved trying out the compression suit, which felt like being in a giant blood pressure cuff! It was an amazing event with some wonderful feedback. More about the event on page 23.

We've also expanded our young and newly diagnosed connection group at Lawson Flats, which we're incredibly excited about. I hear karaoke was even a possibility at the last catch-up! We look forward to this going from strength to strength - it's been a long time coming.

As we look ahead to Christmas and next year, we have many exciting things happening. Our MSWA Shenton Park development in Montario Quarter is also taking shape and is due to open mid-next year. We can't wait to see it finished and share it with you. We're also very excited about how we can share ideas between the NT, SA and WA to make a positive difference for you and all our communities.

I look forward to sharing all of this and seeing you at our various Christmas events and parties later this year.

Thank you again for all your loyalty, support and input.



Important update: MSWA and the MS Society SA & NT

MSWA, supported by MS Australia, has stepped in to stabilise support and ensure continuity of care for people living with MS across South Australia and the Northern Territory. This follows the news that the MS Society SA & NT has entered voluntary administration.

We remain committed to providing those living with neurological conditions the choice, options and support they deserve, no matter where they live. This reinforces MSWA's leadership role in shaping neurological care nationally, as we continue to advocate for better outcomes for those living with a neurological condition across Australia.

MSWA is in a strong position to provide stability and help minimise disruption to care for individuals in SA and the NT. We'll also be supporting future fundraising and lottery activities to help strengthen the future of services in both regions.

What does this mean for you?

For you, our Clients in WA, there is no change to your services.

While this is a significant step forward for MSWA, our purpose and vision remain the same - to empower people living with neurological conditions to live their best lives, with choice, options and the support they deserve.

As we move forward together, we'll keep you informed and remain focused on putting the needs of people living with MS and other neurological conditions first.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your Client Liaison Coordinator or email our team at customerservice@mswa.org.au

Thank you for your support.

Introducing the Life not Limits Grant *In Memory of Ros Harman*



At MSWA, we recognise the importance of empowering West Aussies living with a neurological condition to focus on life, not limits. That's why we've created the Life not Limits Grant in memory of Ros Harman, providing monetary support to help turn your aspirations into action.

Open to all MSWA Clients, this grant is designed for those who are passionate about pursuing their goals and passion projects - whether you're a Client at the beginning of your journey or have been pursuing a passion for years.

There are five categories' applicants can apply for:

A total of nine grants will be awarded across three funding tiers:

- Five grants of \$1,000.
- Two grants of \$2,500.
- Two grants of \$5,000.

Applications have closed for 2025. Successful applicants will be announced on our website and social media.

[Learn more](#)



-  **Inspiring Bright Minds**
Empowering individuals to pursue personal growth and lifelong learning through courses, workshops, certifications and mentoring.
-  **Creative Sparks**
Exploring artistic passions such as photography, painting, music and writing as a pathway for self-expression.
-  **Live Well (Health & Wellbeing)**
Supporting physical, mental and emotional wellbeing through activities like sport, fitness programs, mindfulness workshops and therapy sessions.
-  **Connect Communities**
Supporting projects that foster social inclusion, strengthen relationships and encourage meaningful contributions within local communities.
-  **Sky's the Limit**
For the bold, boundary-pushing ideas that don't fit a specific category - celebrating innovation, ambition and the freedom to explore new possibilities.

In memory of Ros Harman

A passionate writer, Chair of the MSWA Board and a resilient advocate, Ros was the living embodiment of MSWA's purpose: to empower people with neurological conditions to live their best lives.

Diagnosed with MS at 26 and MND in her later years, Ros wasn't one to sit back and let her diagnosis define her. She faced the many challenges that comes with her condition with heart, humour and infectious positivity.

Ros sadly passed away in 2025, but her legacy lives on through MSWA. She was truly an inspiration to the neuro community and in her memory, we're honoured to launch the Life not Limits Grant. Because like Ros, we believe every Client should be empowered to live life, not limits.

Tammie Chu
MSWA Content Marketing Officer

Vanessa Paredes
MSWA Marketing Officer

MSWA and Founders Factory join forces to back breakthrough technologies for neurological care

In a global first, MSWA has announced a \$1.75M joint venture with the global tech startup accelerator Founders Factory, to fund and scale breakthrough technologies designed to transform the lives of people living with neurological conditions.

The program will back and fast-track global startups developing cutting-edge solutions, including the use of AI, robotics and wearables that address neurological conditions.

Startups will receive investment and intensive support from Founders Factory to help move from concept to real-world application for people living with MS.

This is Founders Factory's third startup program in WA, following last year's launch of their programs with Rio Tinto (investing in mining-tech startups) and the Government of Western Australia (investing in nature-tech startups).

CEO Melanie Kiely said that this initiative not only strengthens the impact that MSWA can create for people with neurological conditions in Western Australia and across the nation but positions the nonprofit to contribute globally.

"MSWA has long been a champion of neurological research, investing more than \$50 million in the past decade alone," she said.

"As the third partner to join Founders Factory in Western Australia, MSWA is proud to play a pivotal role in bolstering our state's rapidly growing technology ecosystem.

This new innovation strategy marks a bold step forward, transforming cutting-edge research into tangible outcomes for our Clients and the wider neuro community.

The launch announcement, hosted at MSWA Wilson Services Centre, was endorsed and attended by Premier Roger Cook, with the Premier praising the partnership as a key driver for innovation and growth in the state.

"My government is ensuring all Western Australians can access the healthcare they need, when they need it," he said.

"WA leads the nation for prevention and care in the neurological community, and this partnership is a great example of what our State does best.

"This is a commitment that will ensure WA remains a nation leader in the field and support the wellbeing of all Western Australians."



(L-R) Nicolette Murphy, Melanie Kiely, Premier Roger Cook and Rohan Silva.



Premier Roger Cook with MSWA Clients and MSWA CEO Melanie Kiely.



Premier Roger Cook meeting MSWA Client Nicolette Murphy.

Science and Innovation and Medical Research Minister Stephen Dawson said the partnership could pave the way for significant medical breakthroughs.

"We know Founders Factory is investing in a range of WA start-ups, which is putting us on the map as a place that welcomes innovative ideas to equip our State for future technologies and opportunities.

"This partnership with MSWA is set to do just that, tapping into the potential of new technologies to find ways in which we can improve the lives of people living with neurological conditions and their caregivers," he said.

Also, in attendance at the launch was MSWA Client, Nicolette Murphy, who said that she's excited to see the impact of MSWA grow beyond Australian shores.

"It's inspiring to consider how innovative solutions could transform the lives of people like me who are living with a neurological condition," said Nicolette.

Rohan Silva, Chair of Western Australia, Founders Factory added;

"This is the world's first startup program focused on multiple sclerosis and neurological conditions - and it's awesome that's happening in Western Australia."

Emergency and crisis planning

During an emergency or a period of crisis, it is critical that you have a plan that will help guide your health and safety. This is important for older Australians, those with disabilities or people with complex health needs leading into summer.

Through an MS Australia funded project – Crisis Resilience in MS – it was identified that the MS community had various concerns about how crises like bushfires had historically affected them and could continue to affect them. To address these concerns, MS Australia partnered with Australia Red Cross to recommend the Australian Red Cross RediPlan to the neuro community. The Red Cross RediPlan provides a clear Crisis or Emergency Plan to ensure people have the necessary resources, support and information to maintain their health and safety during challenging times.

Having a RediPlan can help in the following ways:

1. Safety and security

Defining a clear Crisis or Emergency Plan will ensure that you, your family and support services (including MSWA) will have a shared understanding of personal and agreed safety protocols during emergencies.

2. Personalised support

We know that each person has specific needs or requirements. A plan tailored to your personal circumstances ensures that your individual and unique health, mobility or care needs are met.

3. Resource accessibility

Crisis or Emergency Plans can outline access to necessary resources, such as medical supplies, medications and transportation options.

4. Reducing anxiety

Knowing there is a clear plan can reduce anxiety and provide peace of mind. People generally feel more secure when they understand how to protect themselves in different scenarios and are reassured that organisations like MSWA can activate your Crisis or Emergency Plan if needed.

5. Community support and awareness

Encouraging people to develop such plans fosters community awareness and responsiveness.

This can strengthen your networks of support and ensure that your neighbours, friends, community providers and emergency services are all prepared to assist during any crisis.

6. Post-emergency recovery

A RediPlan not only addresses your immediate safety but also aids in recovery. By outlining steps for accessing health, support services and mental health resources, you can be better equipped to navigate post-disaster challenges.

MSWA wants you to be as safe as possible, especially leading into the upcoming bushfire season. For our high-risk Clients, with your consent, your CLC or another member of the MSWA team will reach out to you and develop a RediPlan that will meet your needs.

We strongly encourage all our Clients to build a RediPlan and share it with MSWA.

MSWA is happy to help you create a RediPlan, so please reach out to your CLC if you need support. Our Nursing team will also ask you about this RediPlan when building your individualised care plans.

The Red Cross RediPlan and various resources can be found here.



We're in this together: Updated Client Rights and Responsibilities

At MSWA, we believe that great care starts with great partnerships. That's why we've updated our Client Rights and Responsibilities to better reflect the mutual respect, trust and collaboration that sits at the heart of everything we do.

These updates aren't just words in documents, they are about people. They're about making sure every Client feels safe, respected and cared for, while also ensuring our staff and volunteers can continue to provide the best possible support in a positive and respectful environment, where they are also kept safe and have their needs met.

So, what's new?

In some ways, nothing, as these principles have always been in place, but the refreshed Rights and Responsibilities have endeavoured to make it clearer and simpler. They still outline what you can expect from MSWA when receiving care and services and also what we ask of you in return. It's a two-way street because when we work together, everyone benefits.

Your rights

As a Client, you have the right to receive high-quality, safe services that protect you from harm.

You'll be treated with dignity and respect and your culture, identity and choices will be acknowledged. Your personal information will be kept confidential and you'll be supported to make informed decisions about your care. You also have the right to give feedback or make complaints without fear of it affecting your care.

Your responsibilities

In return, we ask that you treat our staff and volunteers with courtesy and respect, just as we do with you. That includes recognising their need for breaks and a safe work environment; which includes respecting our pet and smoking policies and understanding we need to follow safe working practices, especially when it comes to lifting and transferring Clients. We also ask that you share relevant health information, respect the privacy of other Clients and let us know if you're feeling unwell before attending sessions. Importantly, we expect all interactions to be unbiased and show the same courtesy to each one of our staff, irrespective of their age, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

Let's talk

If you ever have questions about your Rights or Responsibilities, please speak to a MSWA staff member, contact customerservice@mswa.org.au or call **08 6454 3222**. If we ever have concerns about how responsibilities are being met, we'll always talk with you first to work through it together.

This update is about strengthening the partnership between MSWA and you – our valued Clients. Because when we each bring respect, honesty and care to the table, we create a space where everyone can thrive.

Simon Jennings

MSWA Chief Client Service Delivery Officer

Alison Cox

MSWA Chief Quality Safeguarding & Risk Officer





Artist, Philippa O'Brien.

Reflecting on *Radiance*

You may pass by Philippa O'Brien's artwork every day without even realising. With decades of experience in public art, she has added colour and character across Perth through site-specific pieces that hold up a mirror to the environments many of us may take for granted. For Philippa, public art isn't just about creativity - it's centered around solving practical challenges and seamlessly integrating her work into its surroundings, making it feel as though that art piece was always destined to be there. Soon to be installed at MSWA Shenton Park, Philippa's latest sculpture, *Radiance*, has been purposefully designed with the future residents in mind.

In her early career, Philippa's creativity manifested in many forms - first studying English Literature at university, then travelling to a London art school, before working as a set designer in Western Australian theatre. This eventually led her to the public art space - what she now deems as a natural career progression.

"I did a lot of work as a theatre designer and I was very familiar with playing around with scale - that's something that's been very useful," she said.

With over 30 years of experience in creating art, Philippa has artwork placed all across Perth. One of her most notable creations is the Banksia Garden situated in Kings Park.

"I'm pleased to have done some pieces that will stay there for a long time. I have a work in Kings Park, which I know people are very fond of," she states.

The Banksia Garden consists of two long seats decorated with banksia leaves and marble floor paving. Depicting five banksias that grow naturally in the park, the design is fashioned from sheets of multi-coloured Italian marble. Created before computers, every piece was cut by hand, exactly as the ancient Greeks or Romans would have done.

Creating art that needs to withstand the sometimes intense and varied WA climate is a task that doesn't come easy. Each piece of work needs to be structurally and aesthetically sound, made of practical materials which fit the environment, are nice on the eyes, and budget.

In addition to Kings Park, Philippa has pieces located in the WA Family Court, Bassendean, Gosnells, Mindarie

and many in Ellenbrook. Her next piece is to be placed perfectly primed at the entrance to the new MSWA Shenton Park - slated for completion in June 2026.

The new facility will be composed of 20 state-of-the-art apartments and will offer high-support accommodation. Although Philippa is well-versed in creating works designed for public spaces, her involvement in this project feels especially meaningful. Living with Parkinson's disease herself, she describes a synergy to this project and the impact it will have on people living with neurological conditions.

It's the entry to their home and I think about what that means for people. I want to make an uplifting and positive experience.

Approaching the design process for a piece such as this, Philippa mentioned the environment and audience are two key factors to take into consideration.

"I spent quite a lot of time just absorbing what the site was like. Of course, at that stage it's just a sand patch," she remembers.

"But it was surrounded by the heritage bushland, which when I first saw it - full of beautiful, lush banksia covered in flowers - it looked beautiful. I started off by taking bits of the environment - a few branches, the gum nuts and so on, and just thinking about it all."

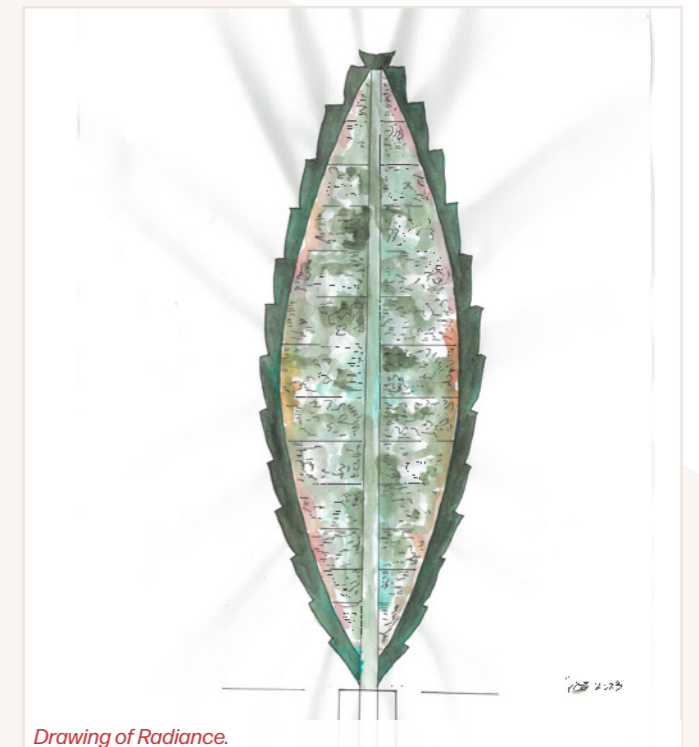
One prominent landmark on the street is a large gumtree. The tree is another example of how public art needs to integrate into the environment, instead of fighting against it. Once Philippa observed the site (and the tree), she began to draft multiple versions of what the sculpture could look like. After throwing everything on a page that came to her head or hand, the selection process began. As always, practicality plays a part.

"You must be very practical about what you can build, what materials you'll use and can afford to build. First, it's the idea you like and second is whatever is practical."

After all her hard work and conceptualising, *Radiance* was created.

Described as a tall and thin stainless-steel structure - which holds its own against the incredible gumtree and surroundings, *Radiance* is a very strong, simple sculpture. But, with some key features.

"It's reflective, it's sparkling, it's alive. It's very responsive to whatever's going around - the weather, a cloud, cars in the street. Its painted parts include the colours of

Drawing of *Radiance*.

the banksias in the park. It absolutely makes a strong statement," she describes.

Every time you go through the doorway, you're going to be reflected. You will sparkle.

Radiance is currently under construction and will be soon installed in its (and the residents') new home in Shenton Park. Philippa's hope is that it makes people feel proud of their surroundings.

"It's beautiful. I hope the residents feel proud of it and they like it as an entry to their home."

Philippa is not only a talented artist but also an author, with her latest book, *No Stone Without a Name*, which you can find at the Subiaco Bookshop.

Now living in Ballarat with her daughter, she reflects on a career that spans time, location and generations - a privilege she takes very seriously.

Through works like *Radiance*, she mentions that the true purpose of adding a beautiful piece of public art to a place is to brighten the lives of the people it's meant for. Simply put, "it's the whole point."

Montana Moran

MSWA Senior Content Marketing Officer

MSWA gratefully acknowledges the Western Australian State Government financial contribution to the project.



Anita and Tony call the Grand Prize winner.

A winning moment MSWA Mega Home Lottery sells out once again!

After another record-breaking sell out, the MSWA Mega Home Lottery has officially wrapped up its final draw for 2025, weeks ahead of schedule.

This year's lucky Grand Prize winner, Ben, a long-time Platinum Club Member who has supported MSWA for more than 10 years, couldn't believe his luck when he received the call from our team. His ticket turned into a life-changing moment, winning him the keys to a stunning \$3.5M fully furnished Floreat Grand Prize home, plus \$100K cash.

"It's an unreal feeling, to be honest it doesn't feel real. I always like to support a charity and always thought MSWA was good cause," he said.

The moment was announced live from the Floreat home and aired on 7NEWS, with the Grand Prize property providing a perfect backdrop for an unforgettable day.

Alongside MSWA's Chief Experience Officer Tony, Anita helped call the lucky winner and announced the Life not Limits Grant, created in memory of her late sister and passionate advocate, Ros Harman. This initiative provides financial support for people living with neurological conditions to kickstart their dreams or passion projects.

The Life not Limits Grant is funded thanks to the generosity of West Australians. You can learn more about the Grant on page 7.

Preparations are already underway for the next Mega Home Lottery, launching early next year. With every draw, West Aussies have the chance to change their lives while supporting people living with neurological conditions.

Dana Alamsyah
MSWA Head of Lotteries



MSWA team members Vanessa, Tammie and Tony celebrate the launch with Anita.

Watch Tony and Anita call the winner



National recognition *Life not limits* campaign

MSWA is incredibly honoured to have been awarded the Marketing Excellence Award for our *Life not limits* campaign at the national Third Sector Awards hosted in Sydney.

The 'Life not limits' campaign was the result of a deeply strategic and collaborative planning process that set out to transform MSWA's brand identity, unify our teams and reconnect all stakeholders to a shared purpose. Through the campaign, we aimed to create an authentic and empowering platform that could stretch seamlessly across both our service delivery and fundraising efforts. The campaign's creative strategy was grounded in real Client stories. Our Clients shared their journeys in raw, emotive and empowering ways - reflecting our core belief that neurological conditions do not define a person's life.

Accepting the award, MSWA's Brand and Campaign Marketing Manager Belinda Sherry expressed her gratitude.

To Hank, Holly, Susan, Chris and our Clients - thank you for letting us tell your stories. You're the reason behind everything we do.

Since the campaign rollout, we've seen a significant uplift in Client experience. MSWA's Client satisfaction score rose from 69% to 78%, with more than four in five Clients now reporting that MSWA meets or exceeds their expectations. The Net Promoter Score (likelihood to recommend) also saw a substantial increase, jumping from +31 to +48.

Importantly, the proportion of Clients who believe MSWA helps reduce the limitations they face rose from 61% to 75%, showing that the 'Life not limits' brand promise is resonating and being realised in practice.

Our 'Life not limits' campaign is now the foundation of how we operate, collaborate and empower our Clients to live their best.

A huge thank you to everyone who supported and continues to believe in our cause to help West Aussies with neurological conditions live life, not limits.

You've likely seen our Inquisitive Creative Hank or remember our Trailblazer Holly, but we know everyone has a story to tell, and we want to hear yours!

Share your story



MSWA team members, Montana, Belinda and Julia at the Third Sector Awards



Belinda accepting the Marketing Excellence award.



The MSWA Marketing team with Client, Hank.

A new era for MS diagnosis

The international standards for diagnosing multiple sclerosis (MS), known as the McDonald criteria have been updated, marking a major milestone in improving early and accurate diagnosis. The revised guidelines and advanced technologies bring hope for earlier and more accurate care.

Named after Professor Ian McDonald, who first developed the criteria in 2001, the guidelines have been revised alongside advances in research and technology. The latest update was agreed by the International Advisory Committee on Clinical Trials in MS, which includes 56 experts from 16 countries, including Australian researchers, in clinical care, radiology, epidemiology, methodology and patient perspectives.

Published in *The Lancet Neurology*, the 2024 update builds on the existing 2017 criteria by introducing new tools and markers. These changes create a more unified approach for diagnosing MS in people with relapsing or progressive courses across all ages. This means that people showing early signs of MS may now receive a confirmed diagnosis sooner and with greater accuracy.

Why the update matters

According to MS Australia's World MS Day My Diagnosis Report, MS diagnosis in Australia currently takes an average of nearly four years from the onset of symptoms.

The revised McDonald criteria aim to shorten this timeframe through several key changes:

- Earlier diagnosis, sometimes after a single clinical episode.
- Recognition of radiologically isolated syndrome using MRI scans and laboratory markers to reveal characteristic brain, spinal cord or optic nerve inflammation before clinical symptoms appear.
- New, less invasive diagnostic tools such as eye scans (optical coherence tomography) and newer spinal fluid tests (kappa free light chains).
- Expanded criteria to improve diagnostic accuracy in children and adults over 50.

Recent studies have already shown encouraging results.

- In Spain, Dr Luca Bollo applied the updated criteria to 300 patients being checked for MS and found diagnoses increased from 47% under the previous 2017 criteria to 71% under the new 2024 criteria.
- In the UK, Dr Wallace Brownlee tested on nearly 200 people in a real clinic and reported more diagnoses under the new criteria and far fewer were left in the 'maybe' category.

These outcomes mean that fewer people will be left waiting and wondering and more people with MS will get timely access to treatment and support.

Smarter tools for a more personal approach

The update also reflects a wider shift in MS research toward more precise and personalised care.

At the 2025 European Committee for Treatment and Research in MS (ECTRIMS), researchers showcased exciting advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and brain imaging that could help clinicians understand each person's type of MS.

Using machine learning, Dr Alessia Bianchi analysed MRI scans and identified hidden MS subtypes:

1. Some with early lesion activity.
2. Others with more widespread brain shrinkage.

Understanding these patterns could help clinicians predict disease progression and guide treatment choices.

In another study, Dr Paola Valsasina used AI to analyse MRI scans and clinical data from over 2,000 people. The technology could distinguish MS from non-MS cases with up to 95% accuracy and even predict future disability based on brain lesion volume and size. These tools could soon improve monitoring and help clinicians provide more individualised care.



Looking to the future: Detecting MS even earlier

Another development at ECTRIMS presented by Dr Ahmed Abdelhak found changes in certain blood proteins up to eight years before. This discovery raises that a simple blood test could one day identify people at risk of MS, allowing earlier intervention and preventing nerve damage.

Hope and progress for the MS community

Together, these updates represent a new era in MS care. The combination of clearer diagnostic criteria, smarter imaging and innovative biomarker research will enable people with MS to start treatment sooner and with greater confidence.

However, ensuring equitable access to advanced MRI and laboratory testing remains essential, especially in regions where diagnostic resources are limited.

As international collaboration continues, the future of MS care looks increasingly hopeful with faster diagnosis, personalised care and improved long-term outcomes for people with MS worldwide.

Julia Tran

MSWA Research Coordinator



Cr. Marnie Richardson.

Sky's the limit

MSWA and Perth Wildcats partnership

Partnering for the second consecutive year, MSWA and the Perth Wildcats unite again, with a shared commitment to community, inclusion and making a meaningful difference.

Amid the electrifying atmosphere of RAC Arena, the highly anticipated Open Air Game in support of MSWA took place on 2 October, drawing over 11,500 enthusiastic fans, whilst raising awareness for the thousands of Western Australians living with neurological conditions.

We extend our appreciation and thanks to the corporate partners, Boom Logistics and Retravision, whose generous contribution of \$7,300 directly supports MSWA.

On game night, the Red Army had plenty of opportunities to get involved and support MSWA, including an exciting activation where fans could spin to win incredible merchandise. In addition, a special one-night-only raffle gave one lucky fan the chance to take home \$1,000, thanks to the MSWA Lotteries team.

MSWA General Manager – Brand, Experience and Community, Debra Packer shared, “supporting people with neurological conditions to continue to do what they

love is at the core of MSWA. Through our supports and services teams, we aim to reduce the limits they can face every day, and with partnerships such as these, we not only raise awareness for our cause, but also create meaningful opportunities and lifelong memories.”

“This partnership is about more than basketball - it’s about connection, inclusion and celebrating the strength of the WA community - who have always been so supportive of MSWA through our fundraising events and activities such as the MSWA Mega Home Lottery.”

“We’re proud to stand alongside the Wildcats and their Red Army once again.”

Mark Arena, Perth Wildcats Owner shared, “The Open Air Game is one of the highlights of our season and having MSWA at the heart of it gives the night even greater meaning. We deeply value the incredible work MSWA does to support West Australians living with neurological conditions and stories like Andrew’s remind us that this game is about more than basketball- it’s about celebrating resilience, creativity and community, and honouring those who carry the Red Army spirit through their lives.”



Winner with MSWA CXO, Tony.



MSWA Client, Andrew speaking to Channel 9.



MSWA team at the Open Air Game.



The public spinning the wheel to win a prize.



MSWA Client, Andrew with the Perth Wildcats players.

Among those inspired by the partnership is MSWA Client, Andrew Grero, a talented Perth-based artist living with young onset Parkinson’s disease, and a proud member of the Red Army. His love for the sport ignited in his early childhood watching Wildcats legends such as Ricky Grace and James Crawford.

“Some of my first memories are sitting down with my family around the living room TV, watching the Wildcats play in the 1990 finals. I remember my dad taking me to the airport to see the players when they flew home and I can’t wait to create the same memories with my son as he grows up.”

30 years on, Andrew’s murals and artworks are scattered across Perth, with his love for the Wildcats continuing to shine through. He was commissioned to create artwork for the team’s 40th Anniversary Ball and continues to pursue his passion for art with the support of MSWA’s supports and services.

With access to MSWA’s specialised teams, Andrew is empowered to live a life of independence and creativity - embodying our tagline of ‘Life not limits’.

Andrew, who last year delivered his largest ever artwork - a 23m x 7m mural in Bassendean, continued, “being diagnosed in 2023 was a life-changing moment, but I refused to let it define me. I have instead chosen to use my art to document my story and raise money for charities, like MSWA, that provide invaluable support for people living with a neurological condition, like myself.”

“My family and I have had brilliant support from MSWA, from the Counselling and Dietetics teams to the Employment Support Services team, who helped me to continue to work.”

Carers Week works wonders

In October, we recognised the amazing work of our unpaid carers as part of National Carers Week.

We know through our research that carers of people with neurological conditions (often family, friends and loved ones) really need our support now more than ever.

To acknowledge this important unpaid role, we held three new events to give carers a chance for respite, to focus on their own self-care – and an opportunity to re-fill their cup after spending so much time looking out for others.

The free, half-day retreats were open to anyone aged 13 and over, and included Pilates, Physio-Chi, a light lunch and a mindfulness session – all thanks to our amazing MSWA Physiotherapy and Counselling teams.

"I attended the Fremantle Carers Day event with my two sisters – it was the first time in so long that we allowed ourselves to truly disconnect from our caring roles and simply enjoy the day together," Carers Week attendee.

The event was beautifully organised, with every detail thoughtfully considered.

Each event was thoughtfully held at a different location, away from our Services Centres, to help create a true sense of rest and relaxation.

Most importantly, the sessions offered a chance to connect with others who understand the carer journey – and to take a moment just for themselves.

We thank the amazing MSWA team who facilitated these events and gave our community a moment to relax and reflect – we can't wait to see what you have planned for next year.

To learn more or explore other events, groups and sessions created especially for carers, head to mswa.org.au/get-involved/events



Connecting with others on the same path.



A moment to reflect.



A light Pilates session.

Caring for Carers

MSWA has always recognised the needs of carers and families of our Clients. Living with a neurological condition can change people's lives in profound ways and it's common for loved ones to be impacted as they take on a caring role.

The MSWA Counselling and Wellbeing team can provide support not only to Clients but also to their carers. We aim to assist in various forms to ease the burden, teach coping strategies and connect carers with others travelling the same journey.

What does it mean to become a carer?

This depends on your loved one's condition, needs and the nature of their condition. Carers offer love and support, a listening ear and practical help of many kinds both in the home and outside of it. Long term, carers can take on many roles such as chauffeur, personal assistant, nurse, advocate, counsellor, coach, NDIS wrangler, holiday coordinator and support worker – on top of being a partner, son/daughter, sibling, friend or parent!

These new roles can take up increasing amounts of time, which sometimes means changing hours or location of work, re-thinking career goals and retirement plans,

family planning, sports, hobbies and time with friends doing leisure activities. On top of time dedicated to care for a loved one, there are often considerable financial implications – especially if paid working hours get reduced to fulfil caring responsibilities.

Carer burnout – prevention is key!

The long-term nature of caring means there is a high risk of exhaustion and even burnout for carers. Early signs of burnout include:

- Increased stress levels.
- Mood swings and low mood.
- More irritable, snappy or critical.
- Feeling empty, flat, cynical or pessimistic.
- Loss of interest in previous hobbies or social networks.
- Disturbed sleep – not enough or a lot more than your usual routine.
- Physical symptoms like migraines or gut problems.

It's hard to recover from carer burnout whilst still caring, so the key is recognising that you are struggling before you reach that stage. This is where a good friend, family member, counsellor or members of your carer support group can provide valuable feedback if they think you're under increasing strain.

If you're experiencing signs of burnout or just need support, the MSWA Counselling and Wellbeing team can offer:

- **Short-term counselling**
Accessible counselling support for carers, available through face-to-face sessions or telehealth.
- **Wellbeing workshops**
Interactive sessions that provide psychoeducation and practical tools to enhance self-care and wellbeing – skills that extend beyond the caring role into other areas of life.
- **Carer support groups**
A confidential space for carers to connect, share experiences, reflect on challenges and exchange tips and advice.

If you don't currently have a counsellor, now might be a great time to connect with one. Being a carer can sometimes feel like the proverbial frog in the pot of boiling water – so focused on caring for others you don't realise how hot the water's getting, until it feels overwhelming.

Eve Parsons
MSWA Senior Counsellor

Feel better with fibre!

Dietary fibre is a type of carbohydrate that is not digested or absorbed in the small intestine. Instead, it is absorbed in the large intestine, where it is fermented by beneficial gut bacteria.

Having a high fibre diet can help you to

- Feel fuller for longer.
- Support healthy cholesterol and blood glucose levels.
- Promote a balanced gut microbiome.
- Keep your bowels regular.
- Help reduce risk of bowel cancer, type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

There are three main types of fibre:

1. Soluble fibre dissolves in water in the small intestine, forming a gel-like substance. This slows digestion, promotes feelings of fullness and helps food move smoothly through the gut. It also helps soften stools which can help relieve constipation. Foods high in soluble fibre includes the flesh of fruits and vegetables, rolled oats, legumes (e.g. lentils, chickpeas), chia seeds and psyllium husk.
2. Insoluble fibre does not dissolve in water. Instead, it adds bulk to stool and acts like a "broom", helping to keep your intestines clean and your bowel

movements regular. Foods high in insoluble fibre includes the skins and seeds of fruit and vegetables, wholegrains (e.g. wholegrain bread, wholemeal pasta, brown rice, wholegrain cereals), nuts, seeds and legumes.

3. Resistant starch is a type of carbohydrate that is fermented in the large intestine, where it feeds the billions of beneficial gut bacteria, helping to support a healthy gut microbiome. Foods that are high in resistant starch include, slightly green bananas, cooked and cooled potatoes, pasta and rice (like pasta or potato salads), legumes and oats (especially when soaked overnight).

How much fibre do you need?

The recommended daily intake of total fibre is 30g for men and 25g for women.

Eating a variety of plant-based foods each day will help meet your fibre needs.

Jodie Roberts
MSWA Senior Dietitian

Fibre boost breakfast oats recipe

SERVES: 1 ENERGY: 2018kj PROTEIN: 24g FAT: 16g (4g SATURATED) FIBRE: 10.5g SODIUM: 200mg

Ingredients

- ½ cup rolled oats
- ½ cup reduced fat milk
- ½ cup low fat Greek yoghurt
- ½ cup mixed frozen berries
- 1 tbsp almonds
- 1 tbsp sultanas

Method

1. Combine oats, milk, Greek yoghurt, sultanas and frozen berries in container. Mix until combined.
2. Leave in the refrigerator overnight.
3. Top with almonds. Enjoy!



MSWA Client and Community Forum 2025

Watch the event
livestream



The MSWA Client and Community Forum held at Telethon Speech & Hearing provided a valuable opportunity to connect, gather feedback and share insights relevant to our Clients and neuro community. We had a diverse lineup of speakers covering a range of topics, including the latest developments in the disability sector, advances in clinical practice and important new initiatives aimed at improving outcomes for our Clients.

Building on the positive feedback from last year, the forum was once again livestreamed to ensure those unable to attend in person could participate. This format also allowed online viewers to submit questions directly to our speakers.

Some key highlights from the forum includes:

State of the sector

The forum started with the current state of the disability sector, particularly the financial viability of many NDIS providers with concerns that this will cause widespread disruption to services for people with a disability. In the 2023-24 financial year, almost three quarters of NDIS service providers reported they made a loss or, at best, broke even. This means that support for people with the most complex needs are at greatest risk. In response, MSWA will need to change how some of our services

are delivered, with a push for Clients to attend appointments from our Services Centres.

AI voice generation

Through AI technology, our Speech Pathology team can now create a personalised voice bank from just a short recording of a Client's voice. Traditionally, voice-generation software relied on generic, robotic voices, which could feel impersonal and disconnected to users. With this new technology, Clients can communicate using their own voice, making interactions more personal and authentic.

Clinical collaboration in action – case study

MSWA Client, Chris Morgan was determined to remain mobile and independent following his MS diagnosis. Through the coordinated care provided by the MSWA Employment Support Services and Exercise Physiology team, he has achieved significant improvements in his mobility and quality of life. In Chris' case, he was able to access support that allowed him to continue working and pursue his drag racing hobby. Through the joint efforts of our teams and in collaboration with Modern Orthotic Designs, he was also able to trial a cutting-edge technology, the Exopulse Mollie Suit which helped reduced his pain levels and increased his mobility.

"When I got back home after wearing the suit for one hour I walked from my car to my apartment without my walking aid – I was so happy," Chris shared.

Research panel Q&A

Questions were opened to the floor for our engaging panel, which included MSWA Chief Experience Officer Tony Millar, MSWA Research Coordinator Julia Tran, Client Committee member Ellen-May Eaton and Associate Professor Yvonne Learmonth. A key takeaway from the discussion was the importance of translating research into tangible outcomes and ensuring that research is co-designed with and actively involves, the neuro community it aims to benefit.

Thank you everyone for attending the Client and Community Forum, we hope you can join us for our next one!



MSWA Speech Pathologist,
Charlotte.



Elena *Shy Librarian*
Living with Motor Neuron Disease

The gift of voice

Meet Elena

In her childhood, Elena could never sit still for long – chasing a ball around the soccer field, running on the track or playing netball. She loved being active and being part of a team.

But when she was 15, she started to notice changes. She became clumsy – missing catches she would usually make with ease and tripping over her own feet. Running became exhausting for her, even though she had once set a school record.

“I dropped a plate one day at dinner and mum saw that my left arm was becoming weaker with every passing week,” Elena shared.

“I kept saying I was fine and left it for a full year before my brother finally took me to the hospital after I fell over from an accidental nudge.”

Just before her 17th birthday, Elena received her motor neuron disease (MND) diagnosis. She was still in school, being told that she had a disease that would gradually take away her strength, independence and eventually, her voice.

Honestly I felt nothing at the news. I already knew something was seriously wrong. I had been quietly preparing myself for the worst.

Shortly after her diagnosis, Elena was connected to MSWA via her Physiotherapist, Ben, who introduced her to hydrotherapy, physiotherapy and later to the many services that have supported her for over eight years.

With the support of the MSWA Speech Pathology team, Elena has found new ways to express herself and rediscover her own voice.

Bradley, her MSWA Speech Pathologist has supported Elena for almost four years. Their sessions are calm and encouraging – they read poetry together, practise breathing and play word games like Taboo.

“Everything, we do in our sessions have been helpful honestly. We do breathing exercises, talk about life and what is currently going on in each of ours. We work on my speech and increasing my volume,” Elena comments.

After each session, Elena feels empowered – a huge gift for someone that is living with a disease that often makes her feel powerless. To Elena, it doesn’t feel like therapy – it feels like catching up with friends who help her navigate the new normal.

The biggest gift of all has been her eye-gaze machine. It tracks her eye movements and speaks the sentences she wants to say. At first, it had a robotic voice.

“My friend sent me videos of 13-14 year old me, Bradley used that as the base for me.”

Utilising the short audio clip and artificial intelligence (AI), Bradley created a voice profile for Elena, so that her eye-gaze machine could “speak” in her voice.

“My family hadn’t heard my voice in years, almost ten years now. So, when it was ready, I didn’t tell them straight away about it.”

“We had a family meeting set up and I asked that mom set up the device for me. I had to wait until everyone was silent and I just said,

“*Hello guys, miss me?*”

“My younger siblings hadn’t remembered that this was how I sounded like and all my older brothers went outside for a few minutes. They came back in and kept asking questions so that I would write long replies.”

Today at 25, Elena’s condition has progressed quickly, having lost her mobility and voice. However, thanks to MSWA, she’s able to live with dignity, joy and hope.

“Living with MND is strange – I know exactly how to do everything, but my body fights me at every turn. If I don’t have a way of communicating, what would be the point?”

Bridging the gap

Did you know **1 in 5 hours of speech therapy** is funded by donations to MSWA. Some Clients are funded just 10 hours of speech therapy per year – barely enough to make real progress.

Speech is more than just words – it’s connection, identity and dignity. The MSWA Speech Pathology team works to protect one’s speech for as long as possible and when speech fades, our team helps people find new ways to express themselves, so no one is left unheard.

Your donation can help people keep their voice and connection for longer.

Watch Elena's story



Leah Voller
MSWA Senior Philanthropy Officer



MSWA Client Elena and MSWA Speech Pathologist Bradley.

Return to the red dirt: Ellen-May's cruise



Ellen-May still remembers her first visit to the Kimberley. The region captivated her; she loved the stark contrast of the rusty, red dirt and the stunning blue ocean, and she knew should had to go back. Finally, the 'stars aligned' and she ticked the item from her bucket list with an 11-day cruise from Darwin to Broome.

"Decades ago, I did a Perth to Kununurra camping trip where I got to experience some of the Kimberley - it has such a fascinating history and just amazing environment."

"I've done a lot of the land activities at the Kimberley, and I've always wanted to see it from the ocean. Some of the attractions can only be seen from the water. So, it was always a bucket list item for me."

In October, Ellen-May boarded the Ponant Explorations cruise, which organised daily expeditions that took visitors across the water and onto land to explore the local area.

"They had a very slick program worked out. We had expedition leaders that had a keen interest in geology, biology, environment and agriculture. They did information sessions in the evenings, and the next day they would take us out on the rubber dinghies, known as zodiacs."

Among the many stand out moments of the trip, one that Ellen-May remembered fondly was witnessing the Mitchell Falls. This iconic waterfall cascades over layers of sandstone. Reaching the falls, however, was no walk in the park.

"Getting there was quite difficult, and I was only able to do with the support of the staff. I had to get in and out of

the zodiac, walked up this shell beach, before hopping into the helicopter, where we landed in a shaded area."

She sat in the shaded area for a while before mustering up her courage to hike to the lookout.

"I've seen the falls from the air, but I wanted to see it up close. So, I did the hike. I had the two expedition guys with me, and they stayed with me the whole time."

When she finally reached the lookout, she was blown away by the breathtaking view, every step of the journey was worth it.

Other memorable moments include, admiring the striking rock formations, seeing the Montgomery Reef during the low tides and experiencing Horizontal Falls - a natural phenomenon where enormous tidal currents force water through two narrow coastal gorges.

Above all, Ellen-May was elated by how accessible the cruise was noting there were accessible rooms for booking, elevators in the cruise and highly rating the Ponant team for their warmth and assistance throughout the trip.

"You get to meet people from different parts of Australia and the world. It was great fun!"

"I took a book with me, but I didn't even read a thing!" she joked.

Tammie Chu
MSWA Content Marketing Officer

Bunbury Swim returns with a splash!



On Saturday, 13 September, the MSWA Bunbury Swim made its long-awaited return after a nine-year break. The event once again brought the community together at the South West Sports Centre for a day filled with energy, teamwork and raising money for West Aussies living with neurological conditions.

Over the course of the seven-hour relay, 57 incredible participants took to the pool, swimming a combined 2,277 laps, an outstanding achievement that truly reflects the dedication and enthusiasm of everyone involved.

Together, our swimmers, donors and supporters raised a remarkable \$16,725 for MSWA. These funds will help provide essential services and support to people living with neurological conditions from therapy, equipment to research and community support programs.

A huge thank you goes out to our proud community partners - Southern Ports, Retravisio and Roof West, for their generous backing of this event. Their ongoing commitment to local causes plays an essential role in bringing events like the Bunbury Swim to life.

We also want to celebrate some standout efforts from the day:

- **Highest fundraisers:** Leo and Ella Nidd, who tied for first place by raising an impressive \$1,220 each!
- **Highest fundraising team:** Shanae's Shufflers, who made waves with a total of \$5,100 raised.
- **Most laps swum:** Geographe Bay Swim Club, completing a phenomenal 494 laps as a team!

A heartfelt thank you to every swimmer who took part, as well as the spectators, families and volunteers who made the day such a success. Your enthusiasm and generosity created an atmosphere full of excitement, encouragement and community spirit.

The return of the MSWA Bunbury Swim has reminded all of us, the power of coming together for a great cause. If you would like to get involved, make sure to mark your calendars for the MSWA Albany Swim on the 14 March 2026 - another great opportunity to get together and raise money for West Aussies living with neurological conditions.

Samantha Judkins
MSWA Senior Fundraising Events Officer



Scan to view the gallery



Cr. West Beach Studio.



Cr. Nic Duncan.

Walk for a cure: *Daniel's inspiring journey*

Denmark local Daniel Mastalerz has always led an active lifestyle, including 10 years of service in the Royal Australian Army. After leaving the Army, Daniel received a life-changing diagnosis of MS at just 39 years old.

For some, such news might be a reason to slow down. But not Daniel. His determination to keep moving forward sparked the idea of organising a walk that would raise awareness and funds for MSWA.

On Saturday, 4 October, surrounded by friends and family, Daniel's vision came to life. Starting from Berridge Park in the Denmark town centre, the group completed a 3.6km round trip to the river's mouth and back.

"This is not just a walk for me; it is a statement that no matter what life throws my way, I will keep fighting.

"Every step is a step towards hope, better treatment and ultimately a step towards a cure," said Daniel.

Thanks to the incredible support of Daniel's community, an impressive \$2,500 was raised to support MSWA's work in providing care, raising awareness and funding vital research.

Thank you, Daniel, for your strength, leadership and unwavering commitment. You've inspired us all, and we're so proud to have you as part of the MSWA community.



And they're off!



Daniel and his supporters.

Simon's coastal walk raises over \$12,000 for MSWA

In the early hours of Friday, 19 September, while most of Perth was still asleep, Community Fundraiser Simon Trinca from Forte Physiotherapy set off on a remarkable journey. Joined by a group of dedicated friends, they walked over 60km from Fremantle to Alkimos, along Perth's stunning coastline to raise funds and awareness for people living with MS and other neurological conditions in WA.

Despite a damp start, the day soon turned into perfect spring weather. The group kept a strong pace, determined to beat Google Maps' 15-hour estimate. In a powerful display of endurance and teamwork, they completed the walk in just 9 hours and 50 minutes at the Alkimos lookout. Taking in the sweeping views back toward Scarborough Beach which showed just how far they had come.

This was the team's first fundraising event and the results far exceeded their expectations.

Supporters rallied behind the cause helping to raise an incredible amount.

"We intend to continue raising awareness within the community," said Simon.

"This walk was just the beginning and we're already looking forward to planning our next fundraising event in 2026."

With determination, community spirit and a shared commitment to making a difference, Simon and his team proved that even a simple walk can create a powerful impact.



A damp start.

Thank you to our 2025 Community Fundraising superstars!

As 2025 comes to a close, we want to take a moment to say a heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you who arranged or took part in fundraising events on behalf of MSWA.

Your incredible efforts have not only raised vital funds to support people living with neurological conditions but have also helped to raise awareness and drive forward important research that brings hope to so many.

Whether you hosted an event, joined a challenge, or simply helped spread the word, your passion and commitment have made a real difference. You are truly superstars and we are so grateful to have you as part of the MSWA community.

We would love to see you back in 2026, continuing this journey with us and helping to create even more impact.

If you have a fundraising idea for the new year, we'd love to hear from you!

Please reach out to us at events@mswa.org.au and let's bring your ideas to life together.



Trish Watson and the MSWA Community Fundraising Events team

Visit our new Community Fundraising website!



Leo and Olivia.

2025 MS Readathon: WA schools led the way!

The MS Readathon just wrapped up its 47th year and WA schools are turning pages and turning heads! This much-loved August tradition inspires kids across Australia to read while raising funds for people living with MS. And this year, two WA schools made the national top ten!

Wembley Primary School has done it again, topping the country for the third time with a phenomenal \$13,153 raised. A special shoutout to Year Two legend Leo, who raised an incredible \$4,000, making him the highest individual fundraiser in Australia!

Beenyup Primary School also made WA proud, landing in the top ten with \$2,733 raised. With over 30 students diving into books, their enthusiasm is contagious.

It's not just the kids getting involved, more older Australians are joining the Readathon than ever before, proving that the love of reading truly knows no age limit.

A Wembley Primary School spokesperson summed it up perfectly:

"By combining the joy of reading with a cause that changes lives, our students have once again proven that young people can make an incredible impact."

Huge congratulations to all the students, families, staff and grown-up readers - who made this year's Readathon unforgettable. You've shown that when we read, fundraise and dream big - anything is possible!

Trish Watson
MSWA Community Fundraising
Events Officer



Leo and all the books he read for the MS Readathon!

Everything Outreach



Down the rabbit hole

Wilson Outreach transformed into a magical wonderland as we hosted a whimsical adventure with our Clients, brilliantly orchestrated by the curious and clever 1st-year ECU OT Students - our very own Mad Hatters-in-training. The garden was alive with laughter and cheer as Clients embarked on five fantastical challenges. Amid the games and giggles, we paused for a very merry birthday for our beloved MSWA Outreach Support Worker, Sharon!



Spring Market success

Another wonderful Spring Market at the MSWA Wilson Services Centre! The Atrium was alive with energy - from Rodger's live music and fun games, to our mini visitors enjoying scavenger hunts, flower fishing and guessing gumballs. We were joined by five fantastic vendors, Client Elizabeth Barret with her stunning diamond dot art and MSWA Care Support Worker Garry, whose pigeon display was a crowd favourite.



Outreach's Oktoberfest

Staff and Clients had a fantastic day out at Whiteman Park in October, enjoying games and a BBQ in the sunshine. The MSWA Lotteries team joined the fun, taking a well-deserved break from lottery planning to spend some time in the valley with our Clients.



Thank you to all who made this a special day - we're looking forward to many more gatherings in the summer months ahead.

The South's new superheroes

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's the South's newest superheroes!

Rockingham Outreach Clients took part in a fantastic superhero-themed activity, dressing up and creating their own unique hero designs for a colourful mural. We hear visitors love walking by and spotting familiar faces transformed into superheroes on the wall.





Book and save on your stay at MSWA Residential Respite!

Book and save

1 booked + 1 free = 2 days

2 booked + 2 free = 4 days

7 booked + 7 free = 14 days

Our City Beach Respite home is specifically designed to accommodate Clients living with neurological conditions, including high care needs.

Respite care gives you the chance to enjoy a change of scenery, meet new people and try new activities, while your carer has the chance to rest and recharge, ensuring they can continue providing the best care for you.

What you can expect

- ✓ 24/7 care and support from MSWA-trained staff.
- ✓ Comfortable, welcoming amenities.
- ✓ Freshly prepared meals.
- ✓ High-speed Wi-Fi.
- ✓ Carer rest and recharge.

Ready to book?

Submit an expression of interest and we'll contact you to discuss funding options and your preferred dates.

Contact clc.referrals@mswa.org.au or scan the QR code.



Scan to express interest



*Offer is limited to availability and applies to MSWA City Beach Respite. Offer ends 31 March 2026, all bookings and additional days must be used before this time. Bookings may take up to 4 weeks to process. Eligibility criteria apply.

Social Connections

Accommodation adventures



Grand Final BBQ lunch

What's a better way to celebrate the AFL Grand Final than with a BBQ!

The decorations were in place, the game was thrilling (for the first three quarters) and the food was delicious! Residents at Hamilton Hill and the MSWA team had a blast watching the game together and of course, enjoyed some friendly rivalry between the Cats and Lions fans.



MSWA Client, Robert.

Frightfully fun movie night

Hamilton Hill residents had a frightfully fun evening as they gathered for a Halloween movie night, featuring the American mystery film *Knives Out*.

It wouldn't be a spooky night without some treats from the candy bar, and our team got into the Halloween spirit whipping up devilishly delicious treats and, of course, serving up fresh, buttery popcorn!

Fresh looks at Fern River

It was makeover time at Fern River! Our residents were treated to some stylish new cuts from Lynette at Helpful Hair and the smiles said it all. There was laughter, chatter and a whole lot of confidence shining through. Nothing like a fresh new look to lift the spirits!



MSWA Client, Jenny.



MSWA Client, Suzanne.

News in brief

Huntington's disease successfully treated for the first time

In a world first, researchers have successfully treated Huntington's disease in a breakthrough gene therapy trial in the UK. The gene therapy slowed disease progression by 75% - significantly improving quality of life. This is incredibly promising news to our neuro community!



Scan to read more

Renewed funding for MSWA Employment Support Services

We're proud to share that MSWA, in partnership with not-for-profit employment services provider CoAct, has been selected to deliver the Australian Government's new disability employment program, Inclusive Employment Australia. The new program have replaced the Disability Employment Services (DES) from 1 November 2025.

This reform represents a shift toward more personalised, community-based services that prioritise choice, control and meaningful outcomes.

Our dedicated ESS team looks forward to continuing our mission of empowering people with neurological conditions to achieve their employment goals, while partnering with local employers to foster inclusive, diverse and resilient workplaces across WA communities.



MSWA team at the Disability Connection Expo.

Disability Connection Expo

In August, the MSWA team attended The Developing Australian Communities' Perth Disability Connection Expo. It was a fantastic opportunity to connect with the wider community and showcase the comprehensive wraparound services we offer. We thoroughly enjoyed engaging with attendees inviting them to sit down, make friendship bracelets and provide a welcoming space to have a yarn and chat.



Leave a lasting legacy

By leaving a gift in your Will, you can help us continue providing vital care and work towards causes, cures and better treatments for people living with neurological conditions.

Your legacy can bring hope and meaningful change - supporting Clients, their families and future generations for years to come.

Find out how a gift in your Will can shape the future of MSWA.



Scan to leave a gift in your Will

Save the date



Mark your calendars and get ready to move!

MSWA is back with an exciting lineup of fundraising events in Perth and regional WA. Whether you're a fitness enthusiast or just looking to make a difference by fundraising, come along and support the WA neuro community!

Which event will you take on?

Got game?

Love the electrifying atmosphere of a fast-paced basketball game? Be part of the sea of red cheering on the Perth Wildcats at RAC Arena!

As part of MSWA's renewed partnership with the Wildcats, we're giving away double passes to catch the action live throughout the season.

All you have to do is register your interest and be in the draw to win!



Scan to enter now

Submit your article to us

Do you have a story about living with a neurological condition in WA that other MSWA Clients might like to read? We invite you to share your experiences with us.

Email your submission to bulletin@mswa.org.au for consideration.

Suggestions, complaints and compliments

We want to hear from you. Your feedback helps us to understand what is working well and where we can improve.

You can raise a concern or acknowledge the support an MSWA staff member has provided by contacting us using the details below.

Phone 6454 3173
Email feedback@mswa.org.au
Write to Quality and Compliance;
Locked Bag 2,
BENTLEY DC 6983.

For more information, visit mswa.org.au/who-we-are/contact-us



*Bunbury Swim
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