MSWA Life not limits

Inquisitive Creative,
Hank Gidney.
Read more on page 6.

Bulletin

YOUR MSWA MAGAZINE

BUNURU | SECOND SUMMER 2025

mswa.org.au

Inside

MSWA Life not limits

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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

Tony Millar, Montana Moran, Tammie Chu and Nicolette Murphy.

Contributors

Thank you to all our MSWA contributors from across our organisation, who take to 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, Wellbeing and Peer Support**
- **Community Support & In-home Care**
- **Dietetics**
- **Occupational Therapy**
- **Outreach**
- **Physiotherapy**
- **Social Welfare**
- **Speech Pathology**
- **Nursing**
- **Support Coordination**

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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

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Welcome to the Bunuru 2025 edition of Bulletin

Bunuru is the hottest time of the year, with hot easterly winds and very little rain. Traditionally, this is a great time to spend by Perth's many bodies of water – the coast, rivers and estuaries. During Bunuru, the white flowering gums are in full bloom – look out for the ghost gums, marri and jarrah trees.[1]

Contents

Cr. Getty Images.

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.

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

From our CEO

Melanie Kiely

Happy New Year to you all! It was so lovely to end 2024 with some heartwarming Christmas events at Optus Stadium, Butler and in the regions. I am sorry I didn't get to go to them all as I was on leave, but I've heard that those who attended had a fantastic time.

I entered this year with one word as my goal and that was 'courage'. Courage to do the things I have been too scared to try for a while – to push myself outside of my comfort zone. Maybe that is my way of focusing on life and to not let the mental limits define the decisions I make. When I watch our new advertisements featuring MSWA Clients, Hank and Holly, I am inspired to be brave, to keep going and to be true to what brings me joy.

One of the first things I did this year was attend the Perth Wildcats game as part of our new partnership. I was brave but, in the process, I cheered for the wrong team at the beginning! Very embarrassing but all part of learning. I'm officially a Wildcats fan now, and Hank and I are planning to become cheerleaders (of a sort!). Read more about the event on page 10.

There have been several other events including the MSA Symposium conference held in Sydney, which I attended with MSWA Client, Nicolette Murphy. Nicolette spoke at the conference sharing both the challenges and the joys she has in life living with MS. Read about Nicolette's experience on page 14.

We also had the NDS International Day of Disability lunch in December 2024. Thank you to all our Clients who attended. It was amazing to see the talented crafts on sale and skills showcased on stage.

> *These events and partnerships all reflect our community that gives strives and supports. It is an incredible community that we look forward to growing throughout 2025.*

As we face forward to 2025, I hope we have even more joy in co-creating and co-designing new and improved ways to connect and support our community. There will be challenges and opportunities as the NDIS reforms come in. Together we need to focus on shaping how those will work, (to the extent that we can) and ensure they improve the participant experience and not make it worse.

I am so encouraged that we now have a team (staff, volunteers and Clients) that are all so passionate about improving 'our' MSWA and making it better and sustainable for the people we exist to serve. Thank you all of you. We look forward to working with you, hearing your ideas and embracing all that 2025 has to bring.

Santa, Melanie and Simon Jennings, MSWA Chief of Client Service Delivery.

Home Care Package changes

The Federal Government is changing how aged care services are delivered and funded, with a staged implementation of changes coming into effect from 1 July 2025. The existing Home Care Package (HCP) program will be replaced with the Support at Home program.

These have been brought about in response to the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. The new Support at Home program will bring together current in home and aged care programs, with the aim of providing a simpler and more equitable system for older people, to support them to stay at home for longer. The new program will also allow improved access to services, equipment, assistive technology and home modifications.

What does it mean for our Clients?

Funding maximum increase

Notably, the Support at Home program will have an increase in annual funding available for in-home care services, with the current maximum of $61,440 raised to $78,000. This increase will provide aged care participants with access to higher levels of care.

New classification framework

From 1 July 2025, a new classification framework will be in place to specify different funding levels. The number of funding packages will increase from the existing 4 levels to 8 levels.

Whilst information about these different funding levels – and what falls into each category – has not been fully released, the Federal Government has advised the final budget will be confirmed before the Support at Home program commences.

The funding budget will be released in quarterly instalments. Participants who have not spent their budget within the quarter will be able to accrue a maximum of $1000 or 10% of their quarterly budget (whichever is higher) from one quarter to the next.

Contributions

Under the Support at Home program, participants will contribute to their aged care costs where they have the means to do so. The level of contribution will be based on income assessments conducted by Services Australia, and will only be for certain services.

For example, nursing and allied health services will continue to be fully funded by the government. Everyday living services, such as domestic assistance and gardening will attract the highest contribution rates, recognising that the government does not typically fund these services for any individual at other stages of life.

For existing Home Care Package participants

On 30 June 2025, all Clients who currently have HCP will maintain the same level of funding and retain any unspent funds under the Support at Home program.

A no worse off principle will apply to the contribution arrangements for participants, who on 12 September 2024 were receiving HCP. This means that no existing HCP clients will be worse off because of the reforms, and they will therefore be making the same contributions or lower contributions then they would have had under the HCP arrangements.

We understand these changes may be overwhelming and confusing, and we will keep you informed as information becomes available to us. If you have any queries or concerns, please contact your Client Liaison Coordinator.

Alison Cox

MSWA Chief of Quality, Safeguarding & Risk

Meditation & MS:

A match made in the mind

Hank Gidney has dedicated countless hours conceptualising and creating artwork that illustrates the emotions and sensations he experiences daily. Through his work, he aims to portray his MS symptoms, providing a unique insight into his journey, as every case is different.

In 2018, Hank was a frequent flyer, and when he began to experience bad pains in his legs and feet, he assumed all that time spent at altitude had manifested in his body as a deep vein thrombosis.

“I was starting to lose sensation, not just in my feet but up to my knees and then thighs. I was really concerned because this was very odd,” Hank recalls.

“My GP directed me to a neurologist, who did further tests over 2-3 months. I ended up in hospital for a week and after the last MRI test, he diagnosed me with having MS.”

For Hank, a mixed media artist whose career has spanned 35 years working as a designer, art director and commercial artist, the diagnosis meant the stressful and demanding deadlines his career required became all that more difficult. Dealing with fatigue and the gamut of emotions MS brings, it required a new approach to life that ordinarily, one would take for granted.

“You don’t function at the level that you could be functioning at, and you’re conscious of the fact that you’re having multiple conversations with yourself. You’re having one about creative work and then you’ve got the other one in the background, which is MS.

“I’ve worked in my chosen profession for so long. Meeting deadlines is always a challenge. Those sorts of things have become increasingly difficult for me to do.

“You have to be kind to yourself and work out what you can and can’t do.”

Hank notes a significant part of his journey with MS has been the mental toll.

“I reached out to MSWA and was put in touch with MSWA Counsellor, Eve Parsons, and started having regular sessions to talk through everything from life, love, loss and grief. For me personally, I needed to make sense of this. What this condition meant for me going forward.”

> *“Mindfulness and meditation for me is a way to have a different conversation, to say look, I know you’re [MS] going to be in the room with me all the time. I know you’re going to do this, but I’m not going to listen. I can live with this and that but it’s not going to shout louder than anything else.”*

As part of MSWA’s Counselling and Wellbeing services, Eve is teaching those with MS and other neurological conditions to practise mindfulness as it is instrumental in reducing stress and chronic pain, accepting change, and appreciating the positives in life.

“This improves our Clients’ resilience as they deal with their symptoms and disabilities over time, and learning mindfulness in a group brings all the benefits of peer support and camaraderie,” Eve Parsons’ says.

As a trained artist, Hank has found solace through creating art that summarises his journey with the sometimes-isolating condition. He has spent a multitude of hours searching for a way to creatively visualise the constant background noise his MS produces.

“All of us have very different journeys with MS. For me, it’s about understanding, and trying to experiment - find out what MS is like as a colour, as something that you see. What would it be if it was something that you could feel? Maybe it has a sound, a feeling.

“Those things are just me trying to really understand in a way that makes sense to me, that may not make sense to anybody else.”

Inquisitive Creative, Hank Gidney.

Hank has recently finished a self-portrait aptly titled *I Can’t Hear You.*

“I think a self-portrait is very contemplative, it’s a bit of stillness and calm. There’s that place between where you feel at peace but everything else around you makes no sense.”

Additionally, in line with the new iteration of the MSWA Life Not Limits campaign, he has created another self-depicting mural labelled, *I Found A Feather*. This vibrant 9-metre-long piece has been publicly displayed in Scarborough and offers a more colourful insight into his journey with MS.

Hank’s face is featured in the mural, with splashes of colour illustrating the energy that expands when synapses fire within the brain. Sometimes they fire correctly, and other times they misfire, which can cause some of Hank’s main symptoms of MS - bad nerve pain and tingling in his arms. The vibrant colours contrast with bird imagery to symbolise freedom.

> *“It's about not being contained - life without limits."*

Looking to the future, Hank hopes to continue living his best life, on his terms. He is very aware MS is a condition that not only affects himself but also those who are closest to him.

“I’ll try and do more things with family because they live with it too. It’s their MS as well. Their life has changed because of me. One thing I like to do is go on regular bush walks, get some fresh air to clear mental space and spend time with my family.”

Montana Moran
MSWA Senior Content Marketing Officer

Hank’s mural, I Found a Feather.

Painters from Mural Media and Hank Gidney.

Bunbury's Lynda Whitton wins prestigious MS Australia Award

> *I'm not one to sit and expect others to do things for me, I set about making life changes to help me down this new path.*

Diagnosed with MS in 1996, Lynda Whitton has dedicated the past three decades to advocating, supporting and bringing together others on a similar journey.

Lynda's drive, determination, and resourcefulness make her a deserving recipient of MS Australia's highest honour–the *2024 John Studdy Award*. This prestigious award recognises outstanding, consistent, and selfless service spanning 10 or more years, honouring those who have made a tangible difference in the lives of people affected by MS.

Lynda's impact has been particularly felt in regional WA, especially in her hometown of Bunbury, where she served as the Bunbury Outreach Group President for 20 years. Her leadership was instrumental in connecting peers and fostering a sense of belonging and community.

"My passion for helping anyone comes from life ethics taught by my parents," Lynda said.

"If a job needs doing, do it. If someone needs help, help them. And always look for the positive. I know the difficulties and uncertainty anyone with MS is going through, so if I'm in a position to help them, I do it willingly."

One of Lynda's proudest achievements is helping establish the Bunbury Swim fundraising event, which began in 2014 and raised an impressive $55,000 within the first year. All proceeds went toward building the fully accessible, purpose-built MSWA Bunbury Service Centre, which opened in 2016. The centre's opening doubled the workforce delivering these vital services, benefiting 100 Clients annually.

Bunbury Advocate, Lynda Whitton.

Additionally for 13 years, Lynda ensured the WA neurological community had a voice at the national table as a MS Australia National Advocate, promoting the profile of MS Australia and its aims on a voluntary basis.

MS Australia's CEO Rohan Greenland praised Lynda's extraordinary contributions, highlighting the importance of recognising those who make a lasting impact in the MS community.

"For decades, Lynda Whitton has been a powerful advocate, leader and fundraiser for MS and the broader neurological community, and this recognition is thoroughly deserved."

While Lynda has received many accolades, she remains humble about her achievements.

"Just being nominated was a surprised and an honour in itself. It's also one I don't feel I deserve - this could be shared with so many wonderful people who are also doing amazing thing for people with MS."

Today, Lynda remains focused on supporting Bunbury's neurological community while cherishing her time with her grandchildren.

"I have eight beautiful grandchildren who melt my heart, so my focus on life now as I get older is to be the best nana I can. It's the best job in the world."

We're incredibly grateful for Lynda's longstanding contributions to MSWA and inspired by her unwavering commitment to improving the lives of people with neurological conditions, both in WA and across the nation.

Can a drug for EBV change the landscape for treating MS?

The Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) is a highly contagious type of herpes that spreads through saliva, with approximately 90% of adults having been exposed to it. It can cause mononucleosis, or mono, especially when contracted during adolescence or young adulthood which, in the general population, presents harmless or mild symptoms.

For many years, researchers suspected multiple sclerosis (MS) to be a rare complication of infection with EBV.

A **recent longitudinal study** following more than 10 million young adults over 20 years found that EBV infection could be a significant environmental factor for those who had signs of nerve damage, several years prior to MS onset.

A growing body of evidence suggests that chronic EBV infection of B cells, a type of immune cell, might be a driver of chronic symptoms in MS, such as fatigue.

Understanding the link between EBV and MS has led to multiple ways of targeting EBV with antiviral medications, vaccines and cell therapies.

Antiviral drugs work by preventing viruses from making copies of themselves (replicating). Although, antivirals don't completely eliminate the virus from the body, there is hope that using them to stop EBV replication can help suppress MS activity.

Despite EBV being a common virus, there are currently no approved antiviral treatments for EBV infection in Australia. Development of new drugs is an expensive and long process. A faster alternative is to "repurpose" drugs already approved for other uses and test them for other conditions.

A **new Australian study** took a systematic approach in selecting 11 approved drugs with the potential to treat EBV in MS for clinical trials in Australia.

In this study, an expert scientific panel assessed each drug for potential effectiveness in treating MS and possible side effects.

Information on potential side effects of the drugs, as well as how they are taken, was reviewed by people living with MS. This expert lived experience panel scored each drug by answering whether they would consider participating in clinical trials for three different purposes in MS: treating disease activity in very early MS, treating fatigue or treating MS progression.

Both panels scored six out of the 11 drugs with the same highest score. A further review by the scientific panel shortlisted four drugs, deemed to have the best balance of effectiveness, safety and being well tolerated for use in MS.

Two **Phase III clinical trials** of repurposing these antiviral drugs for EBV in MS, known as STOP-MS and FIRMS-EBV, is expected to commence recruitment in Australia in the first half of 2025.

These will help to answer whether antivirals are effective in suppressing EBV infection in people with MS, and whether they are effective in treating progression or fatigue in MS.

Funded by the Australian Federal Government's Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF), and supported by MS Australia, **these clinical trials have the potential to revolutionise therapy for the majority of people with MS.**

Adapted from **Could drugs that target EBV treat MS? - MS Australia**

Wildcats Open-Air Game *supporting MSWA*

Earlier this year, the Perth Wildcats partnered with MSWA to raise awareness and funds in support of West Aussies living with neurological conditions. Amongst a sellout crowd, the Perth Wildcats defeated the Adelaide 36ers in an exciting, nail-biting game beneath the open roof at RAC Arena.

Melanie Kiely, MSWA CEO, had the opportunity to celebrate some of the important work MSWA does to empower people living with neurological conditions to live their best life, and the importance of continuing to support such an important cause.

It was wonderful to see the MSWA basketball fans take centre stage for a quarter time courtside activation, joining club legends and other sporting heroes including Shawn Redhage and Nic Naitanui to distribute MSWA merchandise into the crowds.

Amelia, MSWA Client Peter Wells,' six-year-old daughter, had the special role of being the ball kid for the evening, handing over the basketball for the first jump of the match. Amelia had a great time and was so excited to meet her favorite player, Wilbur the Wildcat!

"Thank you so much for the amazing opportunity! Amelia had the time of her life. It was so exciting for her that when she went to bed, she was talking "wildcats" in her sleep! She keeps asking when she can go and watch again!" Peter exclaimed.

A huge thank you to Boom Logistics for generously donating $300 for every free throw made, and to our long-time partner Retravision for contributing $200 for every three-pointer scored by the Wildcats. **Collectively we raised a total of $8,600 in support** of West Aussies living with neurological conditions!

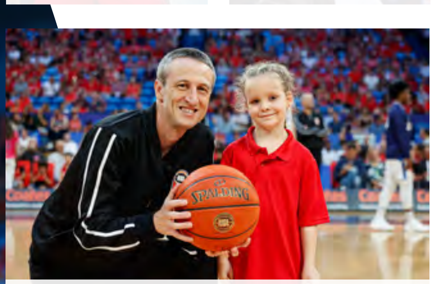
We look forward to building our community partnerships and providing more opportunities for Clients to join us at events throughout the year. Be sure to keep an eye on Bulletin for updates!

Acil Tayba
MSWA Partnerships Manager

The public partaking in our selfie frame activation.

Amelia and Wilbur the Wildcat.

MSWA Client, Andrew Grero.



Amelia Wells as the ball kid for the match.

Court Announcer, Neil Barnard and MSWA CEO, Melanie Kiely.

MSWA Mega Home Lottery: *Beachfront accessibility*

Your daily routine would be transformed if your very own front door was just a short stroll - only 150 steps, to be exact - away from the shoreline of Marmion Beach.

This will be a reality for the winner of the next MSWA Mega Home Lottery who will be walking away with our most MEGA Grand Prize yet, a $4.2M Marmion beachfront home, along with a casual $100K cash to use as they wish.

Situated on West Coast Drive, the house has been designed by Webb & Brown-Neaves (WB) with future proofing and accessibility at the forefront. Given the potential challenges the sloped block presented, particularly concerning accessibility, WB recognised the need for a carefully considered design.

"The challenge is amplified on a sloping site like Marmion, where the natural topography must be adapted without compromising building compliance, privacy, or the structural integrity of the site," describes Designer Innovation Lead, Joseph Calasara.

"Designing with a focus on accessibility and liveability not only enhances its immediate functionality, but also ensures its long-term value. Whether accommodating young families with strollers, providing ease of access for individuals recovering from injury, or eliminating the need for costly renovations as the occupants age, this design prioritises inclusivity."

WB, known for designing luxury homes, notes an important part of the design was to tie in a strong connection to its amazing surroundings, so the house feels like a natural extension of the coastal environment.

"By incorporating [accessible] elements, the design elevates the spaces, making them larger, more open, and better suited to a wide range of needs," Joseph explains.

The house is open and fluid, with multiple accessible features - most notably the inclusion of an elevator and wide passageways.

"The result is a home that not only exudes luxury but also offers a higher level of comfort, functionality, and future adaptability. This enriches the living experience without sacrificing elegance or style. It caters to a diverse range of needs, ensuring the home remains versatile and supportive for all stages of life."

To see more of the innovative, coastal home for yourself, visit the MSWA Mega Home Lottery website, where you can also register to attend one of the upcoming home opens.

Be sure to purchase your ticket for the MSWA Mega Home Lottery by Thursday, 3 April to be in the running to win either the $500K Mega Cash Prize or the $4.3M Grand Prize Package! Plus, there is a 1 in 19 chance to win from over $8M in prizes.

Every ticket purchased helps fund innovative research that paves the way for West Aussies with neurological conditions to live life, not limits.

Buy your tickets at mswalottery.com.au.

Pete Coles, *Challenger*

For Challenger, Pete Coles, he's all too familiar with the words 'play again'. He's consistently faced and triumphed over various life challenges–from relocating to Australia, receiving his Parkinson's diagnosis to thriving in his role at MSWA. His determination to rise above obstacles is just another opportunity for him to level up.

In the 1970s, young Pete was outside a local shop in Hampshire, England, and stumbled upon a foreign machine. His eyes lit up as they darted left and right, following a green shooter as it fired at pixelated 'aliens.' The game that enamoured him was the arcade classic, Space Invaders. This marked the beginning of Pete's love for video games, which has since grown into an impressive collection of games and consoles. His love for gaming continues throughout his life, fuelling his inquisitive and curious nature. It was likely this same curiosity that led him to leave England and explore new horizons.

Looking to escape the cold, Pete visited his local travel agent in 1997, with a simple question, "I have 1,000 pounds, where can I go?"

With just a suitcase in hand, Pete arrived in Sydney where he stayed at Manly Beach and instantly fell in love with the coastal lifestyle Australia has to offer, and he thought 'this is the life!'

After many attempts (and money he remarked), he came back to the land of Oz and even manage to secure his first job as a therapist working in aged care. Not long after, Pete began to miss working in the disability sector, one that he considers his bread and better.

> *"I think caring for someone is a privilege. I've always enjoyed serving people."*

"My brother, Gareth is what drew me into the disability sector. Gareth is slightly younger than me and has a disability."

"I saw the attitudes and values of what people put on those with disabilities in the 70s and 80s. I thought, 'Bugger this, I'm going to change that!' Gareth has 'ability', forget about the 'dis."

Pete lived in Sydney for more than a decade before meeting the love of his life, Kristy. Together, they relocated to Cairns and eventually settled in Perth three years ago. He heard about the beautiful Western Australian landscape from Kristy, who was raised in Busselton, and was instantly sold!

It was in WA that he found the answer to some of his health concerns and symptoms.

"I finally found a doctor that would take me seriously, and he later directed me to see a neurologist."

Pete ticked off all the common symptoms of someone experiencing early onset Parkinson's, including, fatigue, tremors, loss of balance and more.

"When I first received my diagnosis, I was gutted, but at least I got the validation. I wasn't going coo-coo and I'm not psychosomatic."

After taking some time to process the shock of his diagnosis and the flood of emotions that came with it, Pete developed a fresh new outlook on life.

> *"My diagnosis presented a whole new set of challenges for me, but I thought I'm going to hit it head on. It's been a welcome kick up the bum."*

"Before I was hesitant to do new things, now I completely embrace it."

Having worked in the disability sector for 30 years, Pete felt confident reaching out to MSWA for his services, which include dietetics, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, counselling, and domestic assistance.

"My English accent is what gives me my charm, and I'm starting to lose it. My speech pathologists have helped me retain it."

Peter Coles and wife, Kristy at the Wildcats Open Air Game supporting MSWA.

Pete admits the path hasn't always been easy, but he continues to be tenacious and face his challenges head on.

"It's tricky sometimes, I wake up and feel so fatigued, but I tell myself, 'come on Pete, get up lazy bones!"

Having experienced the positive impact of MSWA's services firsthand, when the job vacancy for Client Liaison Coordinator role was posted, he instantly wanted to apply.

"I've heard about the great things done at MSWA and I'm also a witness to that. I applied and got lucky."

"Interestingly, I had my interview on a cruise liner heading into Bali, wearing a straw hat and Hawaiian shirt!"

"It's been great working at MSWA, I've been involved in MSWA Step Up, featured in advertisements, and now I'm going to be in Bulletin! It's a wonderful place to get involved, get your hands dirty and it's good fun. I've met some great people and I've been really fortunate."

Pete deeply enjoys his work at MSWA commenting, "everyone has a story. You just got to take time to listen."

When asked what he would say to someone who is newly diagnosed, Pete mentioned

"I've embraced Parkinson's, it's my friend. I use it to my advantage. I don't let it beat me now."

"Look after yourself. It will take time to get through it but there is lots of support out there. I was stubborn initially to accept support, but you should never be afraid to reach out for help."

In his downtime, Pete loves to give back to his community. His wife, Kristy, cooks and he delivers the food to less fortunate families around their neighbourhood. He also enjoys taking his two dogs for walks, cuddling at home with his cat, and tending to the fish in his aquarium. Of course, you may also spot him at a local game store, always ready for his next challenge!

Tammie Chu

MSWA Content Marketing Officer

Frontiers in MS Symposium

In late November 2024, MS Australia hosted their inaugural Frontiers in MS Research symposium, held in partnership with The University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Centre.

The symposium shone light on the revolutionary research taking place surrounding MS prevention, early detection, effective treatments, and featured the key global collaborations that are driving innovation.

Representing MSWA was Melanie Kiely, CEO, along with Horst Bemmerl, MSWA Board Chair and Nicolette Murphy, MSWA Client with her Care Support Worker Natasha Bishop.

As the rainy days in Sydney unfolded, the conference highlighted the increased importance of empowering those with MS and the wider neuro community to be aware, informed and get involved in research developments.

The symposium concluded with a panel discussion featuring a mix of experts, professors and people living with MS, which included Nicolette. The discussion explored emerging research, clinical trials, and efforts to shape the future of MS prevention.

When asked about a question surrounding wellbeing, in conjunction with sourcing a cure, panellist Professor Bruce Taylor, raised that quality of life should always be prioritised in trial design, as participation itself often benefits individuals, providing optimism and the feeling of contribution.

Nicolette echoed this sentiment, highlighting the mental health benefits of being involved in trials and the excitement that comes from opportunities such as **PLATYPUS** and global collaborations with Canada, the US, and the UK.

Also discussed was the topic of decision-making around Disease Modifying Therapies which Nicolette highlighted the importance of being able to choose a therapy while receiving tailored guidance to suit the specific individual's needs.

MSWA Client, Nicolette Murphy and Care Support Worker, Natasha Bishop.

"To be included in something like that is absolutely phenomenal. We met such informative people, we learned a lot," Nicolette said of her panel experience.

The symposium highlighted the importance of collaboration and the focus of improving outcomes of those living with MS. Additionally, the EBV in the MS National Collaborative Platform was introduced. In conjunction, MSA launched a $8 million partnership with MS Canada to advance prevention initiatives.

To find out more visit **https://go.mswa.org.au/msa-symposium-24**

We look forward to hearing the findings from the 2025 conference, which promises to be just as inspiring.

Nicolette enjoying local food, heading to the airport with her Care Support Worker, Natasha, and presenting at the MSA Symposium.

MSWA End of Year Celebration:

Shining a spotlight on our stars

Our 2024 award winners (some not pictured).

Set beneath the stars at The Maali in Perth Zoo, the MSWA End of Year Festive Celebration was a fantastic opportunity for staff to come together, celebrate, and thank the hardworking individuals who have supported Clients and each other throughout 2024.

For this celebration, we received a record-breaking 370 award nominations from peers, Clients and the wider neuro community, highlighting the incredible staff members we currently have working at MSWA.

Community Support Worker, Bradly Burls was honoured with the Difference Maker Award for the year, a particularly special recognition as the award was nominated by a Client or Client's relative. This award recognises the significant impact and positive difference he has made in a Client's life.

Read one of Bradly's well-deserved nominations:

"Brad has not only been my support worker but a friend as well. He consistently helps me fulfill my goal of keeping active. When I had difficulty walking, he would walk slowly by my side encouraging me. Now my walking has improved, he doesn't complain when we walk 6.5km - he comes ready with umbrella, sunscreen or hat. He is always on time and always engaged."

We're incredibly proud of our team who are making a real difference in West Aussies lives and thank you everyone for putting forward submissions.

A huge congratulations to all our amazing End of Year Award finalists and winners!

Check out all our 2024 award winners below:

The Chair's Impact Award: Winner
Brendon Adams
Community Support Worker

The Chair's Impact Award: Commendation
Emily Ace
Community Engagement Manager

Change Maker Award
Sarah Coutinho
Occupational Therapist

Trailblazer Award
Tammie Chu
Content Marketing Officer

Leading With Purpose – Individual
Wibele Nabubie
Care Support Worker

Leading With Purpose - Team
Speech Pathology and Dietetics Team

Difference Maker Award
Bradly Burls
Community Support Worker

Values Award: Listen
Pash Atukorale
Marketing Operations Manager

Values Award: Respect
Jiyan Hackett
Wilson Receptionist

Values Award: Accountability
Dajana Tesevic
Counsellor and Coordinator of Counselling and Wellbeing Services

Values Award: Difference
Brooke Konowalow
Community Support Worker

Festive fun

MSWA Client Christmas Luncheon

December is all about the holiday season, and what better way to end 2024 and ring in the new year than with festive celebrations alongside our fabulous neuro community!

Set against the stunning backdrop of the Swan River at Optus Stadium, MSWA Clients, family members and staff members came together for the MSWA Client Christmas Luncheon.

Attendees enjoyed a delicious three-course meal, accompanied by impressive performances from the Bletchley Park Primary School choir and the Rossmoyne Senior High School jazz quartet, which had everyone tapping their feet.

There were plenty of opportunities for everyone to get involved and win some fantastic hampers. We also had a special visit from Santa, who, of course, arrived with gifts for everyone!

A big thank you to our community partner, The Brand Agency for their valuable contribution and QBE Insurance for making it a remarkable day for our Clients and community. We would also like to extend our gratitude to State Buildings for their generous hamper donation.

The festivities extended to the regions, with celebratory luncheons held in Vasse, Bunbury, and Albany, attracting nearly 150 attendees in total.

At MSWA, we recognise the importance of building meaningful community connections. We hope everyone had a jolly time and thank you all for attending.

View the photo gallery

Bletchley Park Primary School choir.

Volunteers from community partner The Brand Agency.

Rossmoyne Senior High School Jazz Quartet.

Stunning views from Optus Stadium.

(L-R) Trish Watson and hamper winner, Jodi Russell.

MSWA Clients.

Corporate volunteers from QBE Insurance.

MSWA Clients.

Best Dressed, Shane King, left with MSWA Clients.

Chris Morgan: *Life at full throttle*

Follow Chris' Facebook page - Nervous Racing with MS

Chris trialling the Molli Suit.

The journey to the starting line can sometimes be the most challenging part of the competition, but for Chris Morgan, it's all worth it for those ten seconds of pure speed on his adapted Ducati - moments when it feels as though his MS is no longer in the driver's seat.

Born in Victoria and working as a welder for the majority of his career, Chris' job has taken him all over Australia, eventually moving to Perth in 2012 with his partner, Ebony. In Perth he found adjusting his lifestyle to suit the nature of the slower, more leisurely pace, didn't always come easy.

"It's good and bad! I love Perth, but in Melbourne, you can go out and have a meal at midnight, right? That was the funniest thing, I went to the supermarket on Sunday to buy the food for next week and they were shut," he laughs.

He had been living in various places across rural Australia, such as Kalgoorlie and Collie but after years on the road Chris found himself a fly-in, fly-out position as a pipe welder on the isolated Barrow Island.

In 2016, he was sent home with a double hernia, a prognosis not all that uncommon for a heavy industry. In search of a remedy, he visited a doctor who stated it was just back issues and there was no reason to have additional scans.

With that matter-of-fact diagnosis, Chris returned to welding.

"In 2016 I came home again with that same hernia and found a good GP. He looked at me and said, 'I don't know what's wrong with you, but there's something not right'," he recalls.

By that time, he was finding it difficult to lift his leg high enough to slip into his jeans.

After consulting several doctors, one suggested that Chris should see a neurologist. Not long after, he received the diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (MS).

Being in a labour-intensive industry, it then became dangerous for Chris to still be welding.

"I just couldn't weld the same way I used to. So, when I was diagnosed and went back to work, I probably should have been having treatment straight away."

As the job he had been contracted for was reaching its natural end, he then reluctantly gave up welding, which had been his entire working life and formed so much of his identity.

"Your job now is to get your body in the best shape it can be," Ebony told him once the job was concluded.

After taking some time off, he transitioned to a more office-based, training role in a similar industry, allowing him more time to focus on his other major passion in life, motorbikes, or specifically - Ducati's.

"I used to ride on the road, and then it got a bit too hard. I dropped a few nice Ducati's at the traffic lights because I couldn't get my right leg down good enough, which is expensive and embarrassing," he states wryly.

Having worked with Ducati Bunbury for several years, in late 2019 he then turned to drag racing. Sometimes going more than 200km/hr and in under ten seconds, it was important to find a solution to how his motorbike could be adapted to his personal MS symptoms.

"My foot pegs are lower. The seat is adapted so I sit in the bike, not on the bike. We run an air shifter, so I don't shift with my foot, because I can't. The bike has been designed for me to ride it."

"I don't think the competition likes to be beaten by someone that can't walk properly," he laughs.

Spending sometimes over 12 hours on the track, it can be an exhausting and overwhelming environment, yet Chris has formed a tight-knit community of support at the raceway and online.

> *"The hardest thing for me is to get to the starting line, and then after that, it's just 10 seconds where it feels like I don't have MS."*

Within the community, a video he shared on his Facebook page quickly gained attention, showcasing Chris as a trial participant in the *Ottobock Exopulse Mollii Suit* - or what he fondly deems his 'supersuit.' The suit gives the user ability to control the symptoms of spasticity, and relieve tense, spastic muscles, and the pain that spasticity can cause.

The futuristic, *Exopulse Mollii Suit* can be used as a therapy by those who may have MS, cerebral palsy, stroke, spinal cord injury, acquired brain injury or other diagnoses that lead to various motor disabilities.

"This might sound funny, but the way it feels is like, imagine being totally naked in the rain, and you can feel every single raindrop. It's soothing. You can feel it working as soon as they put it on," admires Chris.

The electro-stimulation treatment is undertaken for around an hour and targets specific muscle groups. The suit has 58 electrodes that combine in various ways to stimulate 40 muscle groups.

"I had a one-hour clinical trial, and I had symptom relief on a sliding scale for 10 to 12 days afterwards. Normally, my calf muscles are tight, [after the suit] everything was nice and free, and my posture was totally different," Chris explains."

My partner, when I was standing at the kitchen bench, noticed I was standing tall, with my shoulders back! It just changes everything. To even be able to squat down and pick something up off the ground...It was like I had no MS."

Once Chris returned home from his trial experience, he noted he was able to walk unassisted from his car to his apartment, a journey for which he would usually rely on a walking stick. Although funding is complicated; he hopes to one day take the suit home for a longer trial.

A strong advocate for life, not limits, Chris continues to live at full throttle. He aims to keep racing across Australia, furthering his advocacy, and hoping to claim the title of the fastest person in the country with MS.

"I race because I love it but if one person sees what I do and it gives them inspiration to do what they love, then that's pretty cool."

Montana Moran

MSWA Senior Content Marketing Officer

Community fundraisers

Tradition of giving

For QBE, giving back isn't just a phrase–it's something they truly believe in. Whether it's through sports, arts, or charities, QBE has been supporting local community organisations for years through volunteering.

The QBE team recently showed their support at the MSWA Client Christmas Luncheon. Since 2009, QBE staff have stepped up, lending a hand to ensure our year end celebrations go off without a hitch. They don't just show up–they're right there in the thick of it, helping to bring everything, and everyone, together.

From arriving early to set up and decorate the venue, to serving meals with friendly smiles to our Clients, and staying behind to clean up long after the last attendee has left - QBE's team is always ready to pitch in!

It's hard to put into words just how grateful we are for everything QBE has done for us over the years. Their generosity and support means the world to us, and we couldn't do it without them. We're so lucky to have them on board and can't wait for many more years of working together to bring joy to our Clients.

Many thanks to all our amazing QBE volunteers who have given up their time over the years, and to this year's standouts: Liz, Louisa, Michelle, Erika, Kate, Leon, Eliza, Jason, Brendan, and Tom!

Making waves for a cause

Dynamic duo, Sana and Rafael is taking on the South32 Rottnest Channel Swim to support MSWA. Their participation in the event is a heartfelt tribute to Sana's grandfather, Greg Brotherson. Throughout his 40-year battle with MS, Greg received remarkable support from MSWA, alongside the unwavering care and dedication of his wife.

In his memory, Sana and Rafael will be raising vital funds for MSWA to support West Australians living with neurological conditions to receive essential services and support.

The pair have spent months preparing for the event, with countless hours of dedicated training leading up to the big day. Their commitment is truly inspiring, and their efforts have made a real impact., with the duo raising more than $8,000 - an outstanding achievement!

Thank you for taking on this challenge and making waves for the MSWA cause!

Trish Watson

MSWA Community Fundraising Events Officer

Get to know: Benjamin Jardine

Welcome to the third instalment of this series, where you get to know the incredible team at MSWA.

Benjamin joined the MSWA Board in 2022 and is currently the Chair of Quality and Client Service, as well as the committee member of People and Governance.

What motivated you to join the MSWA Board?

Three years ago, I stopped working in the disability sector when I was given the opportunity to become the CEO of Type 1 Diabetes Family Centre. While I love my job, I was after an opportunity to give back to the disability sector and not lose my connection to the wonderful people that do such an amazing job every day.

I had always admired the work of MSWA, particularly the way MSWA staff are committed to supporting the person, not just the task. Everything from connecting people to support services and ensuring people have the equipment they need to thrive. So, when the opportunity came to nominate for the Board, I jumped at the chance!

How does your career background set you up for your role?

My career has been dedicated to supporting people experiencing disadvantage, health conditions and challenges that may hinder the life they want to live. Having started my career as a Speech Pathologist, I understand how disability can impact almost every aspect of a person's life.

I've been involved in some major projects, such as taking Silver Chain's health and aged care services nationwide - tripling the number of people it supports. Additionally, I've guided Ability Centre to launch a world-leading early intervention service for babies at risk of developmental disabilities.

What is your favourite achievement as part of the MSWA Board?

I'm most excited about our renewed commitment to co-design. Co-design is all about ensuring that MSWA doesn't do things for people with neurological conditions without involving people with neurological conditions.

We're making sure people with neurological conditions are involved in everything we do, from our lottery draws to our amazing Life not Limits marketing campaigns.

When you have time off, what would we find you doing?

Time off outside of work is so important! I often find that my best ideas come when I'm not thinking about work, and I've had time to recharge and refresh.

My go-to is Karate which is amazing for discipline and focus. Karate keeps me mentally and physically sharp, which is essential for effective leadership.

I also enjoy hopping on my mountain bike to get away from the hustle and bustle. After a day full of serious business meetings, settling down with a trashy science fiction novel, is the perfect antidote!

If you could imagine one thing for MSWA in 10 years, what would it be?

If there's one thing we can ensure, it is that no person living with a neurological condition faces their condition alone. From early diagnosis, through the ups and downs of your journey, MSWA is there.

In 10 years, I imagine every person in WA with a neurological condition paired up with an MSWA coach who will help find the supports you need, adapt to challenges and stay focused on what really matters to them, whether that's an ultramarathon or spending more time with the grandies.

Benjamin practising Karate.

Soothing the heat with RAIN

We're transitioning to the Noongar season of Bunuru, which signifies a time of change and adaptation. During this period, the traditional practice of controlled burning takes place to prevent bushfires and promote new growth.

Many of us turn to nature to renew and recharge our energy, and our emotions have often been likened to weather patterns. We understand that it's not possible to have just sunny and happy emotions, rainy days and stormy weather are very much a part of our human condition and necessary for life.

Similarly to the challenges our planet faces, if we don't pay attention to the changing weather patterns within us, it can result in adverse climate conditions. For instance, unaddressed anger can rage uncontrollably, like a bushfire; unattended grief can lead to a tsunami of tears; and unchecked anxiety can manifest into panic attacks.

Therefore, controlled burning can serve as a great metaphor as to how we can attend to our emotions, so that they are well regulated.

What could controlled burning look like as a strategy for preventing emotional bushfires? One suggestion comes from the meditation practice aptly called RAIN by Tara Brach.

RAIN stands for Recognise, Allow, Investigate and Nurture.

For example, with the emotion of anxiety, to **Recognise** is to notice when we begin to feel the smaller nuances of anxious feelings. We might notice signs in our body, such as butterflies in our stomach, a racing heart or that we're keeping busier than usual. Monitoring this closely allows us to take a step back from a challenging situation to ground ourselves.

Following on from this example, to **Allow** is to give ourselves permission to feel our emotions without trying to change it and without judgment. We can process our acceptance by talking to the right person (friend or counsellor), or expressed through journalling or art.

To **Investigate** is where we learn to become more aware of our triggers, more aware of our conditioning and our sensitivities. For instance, if we have grown up in an environment where our caregivers were anxious and easily overwhelmed, we may have learnt behaviours that are not helpful. This knowledge helps us 'unlearn behaviours' and rewire our brain with good grounding practices.

Finally, to **Nurture** is about practicing self-care, treating ourselves with gentleness and compassion. Self-care can be expressed through sleeping well, exercising, eating a healthy diet, having good social connections, leading a purposeful life and spending time in nature.

By noticing, paying attention, monitoring, and looking deeply, we practice mindfulness, which we can apply to both ourselves and our beautiful planet to promote peace and harmony in our lives.

Janice Petrovic
MSWA Counsellor

First, sit **comfortably** and **relax**

Recognise
what you are **feeling** in the moment

Accept
dont try to fix or **judge** it, **let it be**

Investigate
get to **know** your feelings **with care**

Nurture
the **distressed** part of you

Identify unhelpful thinking:

How your thoughts affect how you feel

There are so many ways of thinking about a situation, yet our minds more often adopt the most unhelpful perspective.

We can become fixated on one aspect of a situation (sometimes the negatives) whilst ignoring the rest (often the positives). We may jump to the worst-case scenario and list all the things that could go wrong. These unhelpful patterns are our mind's way of keeping us safe, but it can affect our confidence, taking away our joy, and making our world smaller.

These thoughts don't just exist - they are the ones we desperately try to suppress, growing frustrated when we can't. Sometimes, they become the loudest voices in our minds, and they are the ones we listen to the most when we make important decisions.

Our *Identifying Unhelpful Thinking* module explores this in a variety of ways that encourages more positive and supportive ways of coping.

When we know ourselves and the old thought patterns that our mind is prone to, we can make choices from a more informed perspective and cope with life's challenges with a better understanding of ourselves. Learning to identify your most common unhelpful thoughts, and how they make you feel, is the first step towards replacing them with more helpful and positive ways of approaching situations in your life.

To attend our next module, visit **www.mswa.org.au/events**. Alternatively, you can contact MSWA Counsellor, Sidrah Khan, **Sidrah.khan@mswa.org.au**.

To explore our other Wellbeing modules, please contact MSWA Wellbeing Manager, Michaela Mundy on **Michaela.Mundy@mswa.org.au**.

Sidrah Khan
MSWA Counsellor

Salivary management: *Part one*

Welcome to the first part of our salivary management series. Let's delve into managing excessive saliva and how the MSWA Nursing team can support you to improve comfort and enhance your quality of life.

Managing mouth secretions can be a challenge for individuals living with neurological conditions. It is vital for Clients to manage this condition as it impairs the body's control over saliva and mucus. Excessive or thickened secretions can cause discomfort, swallowing difficulties, respiratory issues, and increase the risk of aspiration pneumonia.

MSWA Nurses play a crucial role in assessing the unique needs of each individual, implementing strategies for airway clearance, and educating Clients and caregivers.

Neurological conditions can cause secretion problems due to:

- **Dysphagia** known as difficulty in swallowing. Weakness in the muscles used for swallowing may cause saliva to pool in the mouth.
- **Reduced or absent cough reflex** results in a diminished ability to clear secretions increasing the risk of chest infections.
- A **dysfunction autonomic nervous system** can lead to excessive saliva production or thickened mucus.
- Certain **medications** can either increase or decrease secretion levels, which can influence the management strategies employed.

Managing excessive secretions

MSWA Nurses can provide effective secretion management through a combination of medications, nursing interventions and lifestyle modifications, including:

Positioning and postural drainage

- Encourage Clients to sit upright during meals to prevent aspiration.
- Use postural drainage techniques to aid in mucus clearance.
- Reposition Clients regularly to prevent secretions from pooling in the lungs.

Oral and airway hygiene

- Regular oral care to prevent secretion buildup and reduce infection risks, with support from MSWA Speech Pathologists and Dietitians.
- Suctioning may be necessary to remove excessive saliva or mucus, assisted by respiratory physiotherapists.

Hydration and nutrition

- Encourage adequate fluid intake to help thin mucus and make it easier to clear.
- Consider a modified diet for those with swallowing difficulties. Dietetics and speech therapy teams can also assist with tailored programs.

Lifestyle modifications

- Drinking water regularly helps to thin secretions and prevent dryness.
- Increase intake of pineapple and pineapple juice, as the fruit has a natural astringent effect on secretions.
- Avoiding dairy may help, as dairy products thicken mucus.
- Using cool mist humidifiers will help maintain airway moisture.

Therapies and exercises

- Speech therapists can teach swallowing techniques to reduce drooling.
- Respiratory physiotherapists can assist with effective mucus clearance.

Medications

- Anticholinergics medications can block saliva production and are used for conditions like sialorrhea.
- Botox injections can target the salivary glands to reduce saliva production.
- You can also be prescribed atropine eye drops to reduce secretions.
- There are also medications that can help thin secretions, including mucolytics, used to break down thick mucus to ease clearance, and saline nebulizers which helps to loosen mucus for easier expulsion.

Collaborative care

MSWA Nursing team adopts a collaborative care approach to ensure our Clients receive the best possible care and management of symptoms.

They work closely with a variety of specialists, including dietitians, respiratory physiotherapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and physiotherapists. As well as external medical teams such as hospital outpatient clinics.

Proactive management of secretion issues can significantly improve comfort, reduce complications, and enhance the quality of life for people living with neurological conditions.

If you have any queries about salivary management, reach out to MSWA Nursing team for further assistance!

Leonie Randles

MSWA Neurological Liaison Nurse

The heat and MS: *Facing the unrelenting Australian summer*

Cr. Getty Images.

It's going to be hot and tough so please reach out.

Over summer the Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology can issue multiple heatwave warnings for WA. We can't shy away from the fact that experiencing MS during heatwaves can be very tough. According to the CSIRO's State of the **Climate Report,** the frequency of extreme heat events is increasing. It's clear folks, the fury of heat is here to stay. So, let's get ready.

Summer can be tough and many of us must stay indoors for cool refuge. This means we'll probably be stuck inside and sometimes miss out on fun in the outdoors.

Please reach out if that awful feeling of loneliness tries to get the best of you. There's lots to look forward to. MSWA is working closely with the **Client Co-Design and Advisory Committee** to ensure that we're their engine, the very centre of service delivery. We have an exciting calendar of **events** this year, and we want you to join in.

So, let's prepare for heatwaves together. Here are some tips on how I keep safe:

1. Prepare and defend

We can do this.

The University of Sydney's **Collaborating 4 Inclusion** program is a great resource we can use to prepare before heatwaves. It's important that we identify people in our network that we can include in our planning for social isolation impacts during heatwaves.

When it comes to social isolation impacts, reaching out is the best way to defend our wellbeing from the heat.

Heatwaves can also impact us in many other ways. You can read more information through the WA Department of Health. Current weather warnings for WA can be accessed through the **Bureau of Meteorology's website**. Make sure to stay informed.

2. Find your beat

We all have a rhythm and yes, the clock keeps ticking and time does fly away. Yet somewhere in the mix, the minutes and seconds can become allies to help us find our beat. You'll know when the beat is yours. While we're sheltering from the heat, let's hold on to cooler memories. Whether our cool memories are under a palm tree or a starry night, the point is we can recall and savour these moments to help us find our beat. I know this can be hard, but trust me the more we practice the beat, the better our groove will be.

3. Thank you for you

Gratitude must start from within. Yes, many people can help. My beloved husband is often my carer. MS or not MS, we'll all need a carer at some point in our lives. We often thank our carers for their commitment to our wellbeing and in that mix, are we forgetting to thank ourselves? We are also our own carers too. So, go on my friend and thank you for looking after you.

Here's my advice in a nutshell: if you prepare and defend, you can find your beat and you'll thank yourself for it. Make no mistake, it can be hot and tough but from the trenches of heatwaves we must reach out. There's a lot of good work ahead and we're needed this year.

Wildaliz De Jesús

MSWA Client & Member of the Client Co-Design and Advisory Committee

MSWA OCEAN RIDE

Scan here for more information

PEDAL FOR A PURPOSE

The MSWA Ocean Ride is back on Sunday 6, April 2025 with a new location and five ride distances! Explore Perth's stunning scenery while making a real difference to West Aussies living with neurological conditions.

Mark your calendars and join in on the cycle, cheer from the sidelines, or enjoy the Event Village packed with delicious food trucks and family fun activities.

Your participation goes beyond crossing the finish line; the funds you raise help to provide essential services and contribute to research that empowers people with neurological conditions to live their best lives.

Scan the QR code or visit **mswaoceanride.org.au** to join the ride or make a donation.

Online registrations close Sunday, 30 March 2025. Limited on-the-day entries available - don't miss out!

Cycling not your thing? No problem – you can still show your support for MSWA at the Event Village. Come down on the day and enjoy the vibrant atmosphere filled with festivities for the whole family!

Retravision returned as the MSWA Ocean Ride's 2025 Match Giving Partner

Retravision inspired riders by matching donations up to $30,000. Their generous support doubles the impact of every contribution, reinforcing their commitment to giving back to the WA community.

During the Match Giving period, a whopping $60,000 was raised for Ocean Ride in just a number of days!

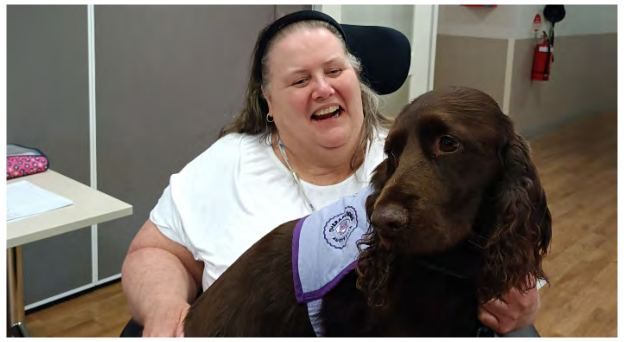
Having partnered with MSWA Ocean Ride for eight years now, together, we're pedalling closer to our mission of helping people living with neurological conditions.

Everything Outreach

Paws and play

We had a very special visit from Marlene Boom from Liberty Occupational Therapy who brought along two wonderful therapy dogs to Bunbury Outreach. Clients and staff paws-itively enjoyed the experience, which brought plenty of joy that day.

We can't wait for more furry days like this!



MSWA Client Janette Davies with a new fluffy friend.

Art exhibition at Canning Library

In December, we had the privilege to exhibit Wilson Outreach Clients' fantastic art pieces at the Canning Library. Thank you to the Canning Library for supporting and showcasing the stellar talents of our neuro community!

MSWA Wilson Outreach Team at Canning Library.

MSWA Butler Christmas Markets

This free accessible community event by MSWA Outreach and Accommodation invited everyone to come along to explore some beautiful hand-crafted stalls, delicious food and entertainment.

Attendees also had an opportunity to tour our Butler residential accommodation facility, which offers modern units for independent living with access to 24/7 care.

Event attendees.

Handcrafted goodies for sale!

Welcome the Year of the Snake

Wilson Outreach welcomed the Lunar New Year with s-s-sensational festive displays to welcome the Year of the Snake. Clients got in on the action, creating vibrant red lanterns to mark the occasion.

MSWA Client, Michelle Hall.

MSWA Client, Nauman Hamid.

Festive decorations.

Accommodation adventures

Cuts for confidence

There's nothing better than leaving the hairdresser with a fresh new haircut! Lynette Hicks from Helpful Hair recently visited our Fern River residents, offering them stylish new haircuts and valuable tips on how to curl, straighten, and blow-dry hair. MSWA Resident Jenny's trademark fringe has made a comeback, and she couldn't be happier!

MSWA Client, David Mewburn with hairdresser Lynette Hicks.

MSWA Client, Jenny Priddle.

Rotary members at Treendale Gardens.

Bunbury Rotary's longstanding support

It was a truly special afternoon, as we invited members of the Greater Bunbury Rotary to Treendale Gardens Respite and Accommodation. The South Bunbury Bunbury Rotary made a generous donation of $80,000 to MSWA 12 years ago to fund this important development which serves our neuro community in the South West.

Take a (virtual) tour!

At MSWA, we offer specialist disability accommodation tailored to meet the unique needs of individuals with neuro conditions. Our high care homes and supported living accommodations are designed to provide round-the-clock staff support.

We've recently utilised a 360-degree camera to capture our accommodation sites, allowing you to take a virtual tour of the units from the comfort of your couch. By exploring the online tour, you can discover what makes our residential care exceptional and view all the details that make these units feel like home.

Visit the High-Support Accommodation page on our website to take a virtual tour or view our current vacancies. Alternatively, if you would like to enquire about vacancies or to join the waitlist, contact your relevant Client Liaison Coordinator, call 08 9365 4888 or email **customerservice@mswa.org.au**

MSWA's Butler Accommodation.

News in brief

Fun and friendship

The Neurological Conditions Community Perth (NCCP) has celebrated another incredible year, bringing together individuals from all corners of Perth to share laughs, creativity, and connection. Each month, the groups meet at various cafes and pubs across the city, providing a welcoming space to forge lasting friendships. NCCP strives to ensure that no one faces their journey with a neurological condition alone.

If you would like to be involved in any future events, contact **nccperth@gmail.com**

Members of the NCCP group.

Neil Daniher

Australian of the Year: Neil Daniher

Congratulations to Neil Daniher on being named 2025 Australian of the Year.

His commitment to raising awareness for motor neuron disease and his unwavering advocacy have made a profound impact on Australia and the wider neuro community. After his diagnosis in 2013, Neil co-founded FightMND, a charity that has raised and invested over $100 million into research aimed at finding a cure.

Montario Quarter: Levelling up!

On February 12, under the moon, hired flood lights glowed over one of MSWA's largest projects. Montario Quarter achieved a major milestone as another solid floor was added to the supported accommodation facility.

The early 3am start followed weeks of preparation on site. The 75-tonne pump crane was ready to deliver 280 cubic meters of wet concrete from a convoy of 35 mixing trucks arriving in the streets below. The new level brings space for extra trades to work together, allowing for an increase in building production.

As the sun rose, the many hours of hard work revealed the outline of five additional apartments, marking an important step toward providing new homes for the residents of the Quad Centre.

We'll keep sharing exciting updates on the construction of Montario Quarter in Bulletin and would like to thank the Department of Health for their support, which is making this project possible.

Steve Corbett

MSWA Property Development and Construction Manager

Save the date

Visit our events page for all the latest happening at MSWA!

MSWA Step Up

Get ready for the MSWA Step Up on Sunday, 22 June 2025!

This iconic family-friendly event offers the opportunity to climb Perth's tallest building, Central Park Tower, while supporting West Aussies living with neurological conditions. Expressions of interest are now open - sign up at **stepupformswa.org.au** to join the challenge!

World MS Day

Friday, 30 May 2025

World MS Day is an international awareness day for everyone affected by MS. It is a day of global solidarity, collective action and hope.

World MS Day is officially on Friday, 30 May. However, events and campaigns can take place throughout the duration of May. The day brings together the global MS community to share stories and raise awareness. This year's theme is **My MS Diagnosis: Navigating MS Together**.

World Parkinson's Day

Friday, 11 April 2025

For 2025, we are calling on those impacted by Parkinson's disease to stand up, speak and unite to end Parkinson's. Together, we can break the stigma and lead the charge to fund medical breakthroughs.

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 you 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 3146**
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**

Trailblazer, Holly Taylor.

To find out more about our services,
create connections or show support
for our cause, visit **mswa.org.au**

MSWA Life not limits