

MSWA

Life not limits



Bulletin

YOUR MSWA MAGAZINE

DJILBA | SPRING 2025

mswa.org.au

Inside

- MSWA Client Committee
- Vision of strength: Dr Geraldine Lane
- Accommodation Open Day
- Get pumped for the MSWA Mega Home Lottery



Life not limits

WILSON CENTRE
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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

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Welcome to Bulletin Djilba 2025 editon

Djilba is a transitional season, marked by a mix of cold, clear days, combined with warmer, rainy and windy periods, with the occasional sunny day in between. As the days warm up, animals can be seen out and about with their offsprings. The woodland birds are still nest bound and protective hence you may spot the swooping behaviour of birds like magpies, willy wag tails and wattle birds.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.

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

NDIS Pricing Changes: *MSWA service impact*



Melanie at the 2025 MSWA Step Up.

From our CEO *Melanie Kiely*

Is it just me or do we all feel like bears in winter, with the overwhelming desire to gather our comforts close and hibernate?

And yet as humans, we don't have the luxury of sitting or sleeping through the cold season, as change is constantly facing us. That is why I am always so impressed by all of you that still come out to attend your services, participate in Outreach and gather at community events. It's not easy, especially when you add the hidden or not so hidden health challenges like pain and fatigue. It makes me proud that we can provide services that warrant you leaving the comfort of your own home.

On a sad note, this has been a hard few months with the loss of two wonderful residential Clients - Samantha in Albany and Joanne in Treendale. Clients are like family to our employees, especially in residential settings. Two losses in one week hit them hard. To compound this, we so sadly and suddenly lost a colleague in our contact centre, Melissa Richardson, who worked with us here at MSWA for four years and was part of the close-knit group in Belmont. Her contribution to the team far exceeded any lottery ticket she helped to sell and she will be sorely missed.

At an organisation level, there is so much change coming our way. The recent NDIS announcement to reduce pricing of therapy services and travel funding, knocked us all back at a time when things are already getting tougher every year. With the cost of future lottery property prices going up, increasing wages (which our hard-working staff deserve), along with government funding going down, we are being squeezed from every angle.

We are also hearing daily about more organisations doing it tough or closing their doors. We are conscious of our duty to make sure MSWA will remain sustainable into the future and to do that we need to work with you all to make some hard calls and reset the way we provide certain services.

We are also conscious that we want to improve how we schedule and deliver our services. There is scope for improvement in continuity of carer and reliability of services. Shortly, we will be piloting some new rostering models, including a self-service model for low needs Clients and a smaller community model in Butler. Both are built on the premise that we can do better by working in a different way.

In other news, the 2025 MSWA Step Up was a huge success, with hundreds climbing Central Park Tower in Perth's city centre. For the first time in years, the winter weather cleared and gave us the rare chance to enjoy rooftop views. Thanks to all the amazing participants, we raised over \$190K - a reminder of the amazing community of supporters we have at MSWA and all of those who take the time to participate and fundraise for such an important cause. Read more on page 20.

As we look ahead, we are continuing to focus on how we can strengthen our fundraising efforts to fund growing gaps in services, funding, homes and research. I hope you find this edition of the Bulletin informative and useful. When there are calls to volunteer, donate, buy a lottery ticket or come along to events, please do. It keeps you active and it helps us keep your MSWA thriving now and into the future.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) released their annual price guide on 16 June 2025, with pricing changes effective from 1 July 2025. Service providers, including MSWA, were made aware of the changes at the same time it was announced to NDIS participants and the general public. We have since been reviewing how these changes impact you and the services we deliver to you.

Alongside our fellow disability support providers across Australia, we are extremely disappointed in the NDIA's decision to reduce the pricing of vital therapy services, despite the increasing costs to provide these services year on year. This is in addition to many of the therapy service pricing structures remaining flat over the past few years, so compounds an already difficult situation.

Furthermore, we are also hugely disappointed in the changes to the way in which travel costs are managed, with a cap now being applied, as this will impact those that live away from major population centres the most.

We know accessing these services is highly beneficial in managing your condition and maintaining your independence and we want to ensure MSWA can sustainably provide fair access to these services in the decades to come. Therefore, we will need to make changes in how some services are delivered; as an initial response we are encouraging Clients, wherever possible, to attend an MSWA Services Centre to receive their therapy.

What does MSWA think about these changes?

These changes by the NDIA are not fair and equitable, nor are they suitable for people living with neurological conditions and the unique challenges you experience.

MSWA is working to advocate in many different ways to challenge this decision by the NDIA, working at every possible level with government agencies, our sister societies and peak bodies in the sector.

These reductions do not acknowledge the value of our therapy teams, who are uniquely experienced in your neurological care. This requires years, of training and experience in the neurological field, ongoing learning and a deep level understanding of specialised equipment to ensure our Clients receive the best possible outcomes. In the instance of our Physiotherapy Team, the depth of neurological knowledge and experience they bring is not comparable to that of general physiotherapy practitioners, nor are the rates charged in this space reflective of the complexity and training involved. This also does not account for the additional administration and compliance documentation required by the NDIA for NDIS Clients.

We sincerely hope the NDIA hears the concerns we, and our fellow not-for-profit organisations are raising and that appropriate action is taken. If you feel as strongly as we do about preserving the ability to provide dedicated neuro care in the place it's needed, we encourage you to speak out and contact your local federal or state MP. We are also seeking stories from Clients disadvantaged by these changes to be part of advocacy story, so please let us know if you fit into this category and want to be part of the advocacy journey.

Simon Jennings
Chief of Client Service Delivery

Find further information on the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits (PAPL) here: ndis.gov.au/providers/pricing-arrangements

Re-introducing you to the MSWA Client Committee

Same purpose, new name!

The Committee formerly known as the 'Client Advisory and CoDesign Committee' is re-launching more simply as our 'Client Committee', complete with an enhanced structure and space for more of our community to get involved.

To get you re-acquainted, the aim of our Committee is to enhance the Client and community experience with MSWA.

In addition to advocating on the community's behalf, the Committee is a mechanism to ensure Client and community representatives are involved in the design and improvement of services, communications and initiatives across the spectrum of MSWA activity, to ensure genuine user-centric outcomes.

Our focus over the past 12 months has been to become trained and upskilled in the codesign process, and to set a clear structure to ensure productivity and broader representation from across our community. This is the result of two years of collaborative work between our foundational members and MSWA leadership.

Moving forward, the Committee will oversee the codesign process, meeting quarterly to table projects, clarify their scope, identify key stakeholders for working groups and provide updates on progress.

Working groups will be formed to actively work through and progress individual projects alongside subject matter experts, to ensure agility, efficiency and broader input. This is a hands-on way to get involved in projects relevant to you, without a long-term commitment.

Projects involve improvements or changes in the delivery of services, the development of new initiatives and communication improvement opportunities.

All members of our neurological community are invited to participate; whether you are a Client receiving services, someone in our community with lived experience or a carer of a loved one. Your experience and input helps ensure the development and implementation of more effective and user-friendly solutions.

Having a diverse range of perspectives is important to ensure we accurately represent our broad neuro community. We will actively seek representation from people of different diagnoses, cultural backgrounds, language groups, community roles and sexual orientations, across the generations where possible.

Register your interest to join our Committee or to participate in our hands-on working groups!



Join our current Committee members for a three-year term:

- Gavin Harper (Co-Chair)
- Allen Roberts
- Angelica Franz
- Ellen-May Eaton
- Jodi Russell
- Terry Compton
- Wildaliz DeJesus Arocho
- Maria Papadimitriou
- **This could be you!**

We look forward to working with you all in this refreshed format, as we strive to make a bigger and better impact for our neuro community.

Emily Ace
MSWA Community Engagement Manager

Gavin Harper
MSWA Client Committee Co-Chair

Creating connections at MSWA After Hours



I used to think no one looks like me, no one is having the same experiences as me, but then I met someone [at After Hours] who had been diagnosed earlier than me. I told him how I've been feeling and his eyes just lit up. He said, 'That's exactly how I felt!' It was such a relief.
- Sophie, 28, living with MS

As human beings, there are so many things that make us unique and special and sometimes we have a tendency to focus on the things that make us different. But really, there is something that binds us all: a want to feel seen, heard, supported - a place to belong - and maybe also the universal desire for a sneaky drink after work!

That's what MSWA After Hours is all about, the chance to meet other like-minded working professionals navigating a neurological diagnosis in a fun, easy-going setting (complete with cocktails) to create a community of support.

We know there are many people living with MS and other neuro conditions in our community who require low-to-no direct care services from MSWA - thanks to the amazing leaps in treatment options made possible through research. But what these guys are missing is the opportunity to connect with others on a similar journey - figuring out who you are amidst a diagnosis while juggling work, kids and everything else life has to throw at you.



The After Hours crew meeting at Lawson Flats.

With support from our partners at State Buildings, we started trialing the After Hours concept in late 2024 and have proudly watched our crew grow steadily over time - receiving feedback that this concept filled a gap that existed for far too long.

Our Perth group currently meets every second month and new faces are always welcome!

We are now proud to announce that after the success of our Perth trial, we are looking to create new groups in the South-West (Bunbury and/or Margaret River) and Peel regions (Mandurah and/or Rockingham).

If you live in these areas and are keen to get involved - or know someone who is - jump online and express your interest, mswa.org.au/mswa-after-hours



Thank you again to State Buildings for helping to make this program possible, your support is invaluable.

Emily Ace
MSWA Community Engagement Manager

MSWA
Neuro collective



Speaking of being part of a community, have you signed up to our Neuro Collective?

Don't miss out on discounts, prizes, meet ups and more!



Get MEGA

pumped for the newest
MSWA Mega Home Lottery



Get your tickets
now!



After selling out three weeks early last time, the MSWA Mega Home Lottery is back! We've pumped up the \$7.2M prize pool with over 10,000 prizes including holidays, electronics, experiences and dining vouchers.

You may have already seen the lucky winner of the \$1.6M luxury Applecross apartment and soon we'll be drawing the Mega Cash Prize to make one West Aussie half a million dollars richer!

But the real show-stopper is still up for grabs.

Worth over \$3.5M and set in the highly desirable suburb of Floreat, this architecturally designed Grand Prize home comes with a long list of luxurious features. Not only could you win this amazing house, but with an extra \$100,000 in your bank account, think about how your life could change in an instant!

- Set on a MEGA 769m2 block of land.
- Fully furnished featuring state-of-the-art appliances and finishes.
- Four spacious bedrooms, three bathrooms with two generous and versatile living areas.
- Large kitchen with butler's pantry and an abundance of storage.
- Huge walk-in wardrobe and ensuite.
- Large airy alfresco.

- Classic expansive Floreat landscaped verge with a sparkling pool.
- Five minute drive to Floreat beach's pristine sands, breathtaking Indian Ocean sunsets and close to Wembley Golf Course, local cafes, great schools and parks.

If you are an MSWA Platinum Club member, you'll have extra chances to win one of four Toyotas (or their cash equivalent)! Members enjoy exclusive member-only draws, invitations to events, special giveaways, discounts and more.

And for the first time ever, if our Grand Prize winner also happens to be a Platinum Club member, they'll win an additional bonus lifestyle package valued at \$10,000 to set up their new life in Floreat.

Every ticket purchased helps MSWA provide vital services and support to West Aussies living with neurological conditions. It also contributes to vital research that focuses on finding causes, improving treatments and ultimately discovering a cure for MS and other neurological conditions.

Sophie Brandsma
MSWA Head of Lotteries

Kylie & Brett: *Life-changing luxury*

In 2020, Kylie Jones became the first ever MSWA Client to win the Grand Prize in the MSWA Mega Home Lottery, receiving the call that she had won the \$3.3M package alongside her husband, Brett.

While the beautiful City Beach home oozed luxury, unfortunately its standard layout didn't cater for someone living with MS and posed significant challenges for Kylie's mobility - a reality that has since inspired MSWA to place greater emphasis on accessibility in Grand Prize homes.

However, the lottery win gave the couple the freedom to then create something truly life changing.

"We wanted a home that worked for us, not one that we had to work around. We focused on ensuring it would support us for years to come as Kylie's needs change," explained Brett.

The couple made the big decision to sell the City Beach house and custom design their own dream home - future-proofed and luxurious. Kylie, who was diagnosed with MS in her early 30s, knew the importance of accessible home design. She not only wanted something liveable, but also a home which her large family and future generations could enjoy.

Completed in 2023, Kylie and Brett's new home seamlessly integrates accessibility within all aspects of the house, whilst still retaining aesthetic value.

Design decisions were made with guidance from the MSWA Occupational Therapy team. While not interior designers, their expertise helped shape a cohesive and stylish space that also supports Kylie's independence and mobility well into the future.

Some amazing features the couple installed were a mineral pool to aid with therapy, additional beams for future hoist installations, large entry ways and wider doorframes built directly into the slab for wheelchair access.

Kylie and Brett's amazing story has helped shape the design of future MSWA Grand Prize home builds, placing a stronger focus on liveability and accessibility to ensure luxury that caters to winners of all abilities.

Montana Moran
MSWA Senior Content Marketing Officer



Kylie and Brett in theatre room with their winning cheque.



(L-R) Tony Millar, Kylie, Brett and Sophie Brandsma at Kylie and Brett's purpose built home.

Digital tools transforming MS Care

Insights from the IPMSA workshop

From 25–27 June 2025, MSWA participated as a funder in the International Progressive Multiple Sclerosis Alliance (IPMSA) Digital Tools Workshop held in the US. The event brought together global experts, clinicians, innovators and people with lived experience to explore how digital technologies can enhance personalised MS care and accelerate clinical trials.

A central theme of the workshop was patient empowerment. With the rise of telehealth, wearable devices and mobile apps, digital tools are increasingly being used to support people living with MS. These technologies offer new ways to integrate care into daily life, making it more accessible and responsive.

Participants emphasised the importance of equitable access and user-friendly design, with patient co-design playing a key role in shaping tools. For digital tools to be effective, they must be sensitive and specific enough to validate patient experiences, support symptom management and facilitate meaningful engagement with healthcare providers, while minimising effort and burden for people with MS.

One promising area is data tracking, which allows individuals with MS and their healthcare team to monitor their condition, respond

quickly to changes and better understand their treatment options. Emerging technologies are also exploring predictive analytics to forecast disease progression, helping both patients and clinicians make informed decisions.

Digital tools also offer significant benefits for those in regional and remote areas, removing barriers related to travel and time. Remote delivery of care can improve symptom management such as fatigue or mobility challenges, while also enriching clinical practice through real-time data collection. These insights provide a clearer picture of disease progression and treatment response, often capturing day-to-day fluctuations that traditional clinic visits may miss.

Beyond monitoring, digital tools can serve as therapeutic interventions, offering improved access to services. They empower individuals to tailor their care to their unique needs and circumstances.

The workshop also addressed the need to bridge research and commercial development. Speed is critical—not only in translating research into outcomes but also in keeping pace with technological advancements. Early collaboration between researchers, developers and people with MS is essential to ensure innovations remain relevant and impactful.

Excitingly, digital tools are showing potential to accelerate clinical trials, delivering meaningful results in months rather than years. This rapid progress increases the likelihood of approving more targeted treatments and encouraging greater patient participation, offering renewed hope for improved outcomes.

Finally, the use of AI and big data—including repurposing existing resources like MRI scans—was highlighted as a transformative approach. By leveraging global MS biobank data, researchers can reduce patient burden while uncovering new insights into disease mechanisms and treatment efficacy.

The workshop showcased a future where technology and compassion converge to improve MS care, making it more personalised, accessible and effective.

Watch the workshop summary



Julia Tran
MSWA Research Coordinator

Supported to succeed: Cathy Watson



Cathy teaching at Bunbury Senior High School

For Cathy Watson, teaching is something she is passionate and proud of. However, after her MS diagnosis and the progression of her symptoms, she was at a crossroads – continue in the career she loves or prepare to leave it behind.

“I got diagnosed about six-seven years ago. Two days before school started, I came down with a massive headache and I got blurring in my right eye. Initially, I thought it was a normal migraine,” Cathy recalled.

“Two days later, I was told you have lesions on your brain and you have MS. It was quite a quick diagnosis.”

Cathy was put into contact with Peta Flynn from MSWA Employment Support Services (ESS) team. MSWA ESS team consists uniquely of qualified healthcare professionals that can provide both employment support and clinical advice for people living with neurological conditions.

“I’ve been with MSWA for seven years now and Peta has been a bit of a god send for the last two years. I touch base with her every Friday after work,” Cathy said.

Peta has consistently advocated for Cathy to receive the supports she needs, so she can continue to thrive in the workplace. Some ways Peta has helped Cathy includes, workplace assessments to help

her access equipment to manage her MS symptoms and ensuring the classroom is tailored to Cathy, so she can conserve her energy for teaching.

Receiving essential support from employers can make all the difference for people navigating a neurological diagnosis and wanting to remain in the workforce.

Mike Sinagra, Principal at Bunbury Senior High School shared, “Cathy is a very high performing teacher and she’s a valued member of staff. Some people only see the disability, but by providing the right support, people [living with a disability] can still contribute at a high level to the organisation.”

Most importantly, through the collaborative efforts of Cathy, Peta and Bunbury Senior High School, Cathy was able to onboard a Care Support Worker that can work with her on schoolgrounds, funded through her NDIS plan.

“My journey with Cathy has been a very rewarding opportunity. We’ve broken ground because we’ve worked to get some wonderful assistance in the workplace with her support worker, Tara,” Peta mentions.

Having the support of Tara has helped Cathy to continue to do what

she loves most – teaching. Tara acts as her arms and legs around the school, helping retain Cathy’s energy, physically and cognitively; as fatigue is a common symptom experienced by people living with MS.

“The deputies and the executives really helped to push through the process to get support in the school, if not I would have quit,” Cathy shared.

“The importance of having [MSWA] Employment Support Services for me is that it kept me working. If I can do this for me, hopefully it will help other people.”

If you’re interested in Employment Support, contact our friendly team today on **9365 4888** or visit our website mswa.org.au

Tammie Chu
MSWA Content Marketing Officer

Watch Cathy's story



Vision of strength: Dr Geraldine Lane

When Geraldine was first diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) and idiopathic intracranial hypertension in the 1980s, she could never have imagined the path that lay ahead or the many barriers she would go on to break.

Now in her 70s, Geraldine is still working as an academic at Curtin University in Perth. She reflects on her life shaped not by limitation, but by determination, innovation and a deep sense of purpose. Read more from Geraldine.

Eventually, I became the first blind person in the world to become a qualified Cisco IT and computer networking instructor.

I was part of the launch for the Cisco Academy for the Vision Impaired (CAVI), where I delivered computer networking and IT instruction to students who are blind or vision-impaired from around the world.

Over the years, I have also worked tirelessly to expand my knowledge and qualifications, earning a total of nine tertiary degrees. These include a PhD in Medicine/Health Science and Master's in Education, Palliative Care, Applied Gerontology and Disability Studies.

My PhD research explored the emotional and physical health benefits of working with a dog guide. The thesis, *There's More to a Dog Guide Than Meets the Eye*, plays a ground-breaking contribution to this area of study.

My academic excellence was also recognised with an induction into the Golden Key International Honour Society, an academic honour society that recognises Alumni who rank in the top 15% of university graduates.



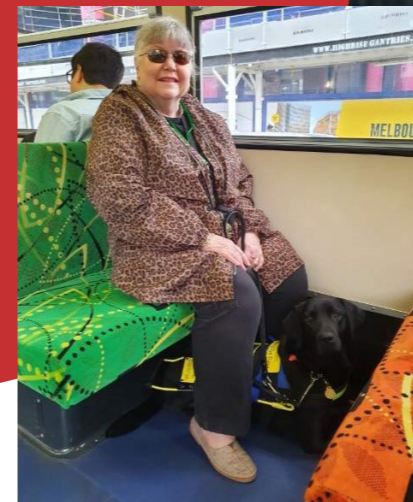
Geraldine's fifth guide dog Noodle

When my symptoms first appeared, I was working as a nurse at Swan District Hospital. I began experiencing debilitating headaches, later identified as the result of increased intracranial pressure, alongside weakness in my right leg. Over time, I also experienced four episodes of optic neuritis, which, along with the raised intracranial pressure, ultimately led to me becoming legally blind.

My eventual diagnoses of multiple sclerosis and idiopathic intracranial hypertension, a rare neurological condition involving excess fluid buildup that causes pressure on the brain, marked a major turning point in my life.

No longer able to work in clinical nursing, I set out to rebuild my life. I learned braille and retrained in education and IT, as I was determined to re-enter the workforce. In 1992, I partnered with my first dog guide, Greta, who helped me regain mobility and independence. Today, I work with my fifth dog guide, Noodle, who plays an active role in my daily and professional life.

When I returned to work, my first role was as a receptionist. I then went on to study teaching, IT and computer networking.



Dr Geraldine Lane and her Seeing Eye Dog, Noodle.

In 2007, I began a career in the tertiary education sector. I now teach university students in education and health sciences. In 2023, I was honoured as a finalist in the Blind Australian of the Year Awards, held annually in Brisbane.

In 2024, I faced a new challenge: a diagnosis of interstitial lung disease, a condition that significantly limited my physical mobility and required me to begin using a powered wheelchair for longer distances.

I couldn't walk far anymore, and I wondered how my Seeing Eye Dog, Noodle would adapt to guiding me.

With the support of Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs, Noodle underwent additional training to become one of the first dog guides in Western Australia trained to guide a person using a powered wheelchair.

Matt Wood, my Seeing Eye Dog Mobility Instructor shares, "We're now training Seeing Eye Dogs to learn about spatial awareness to make sure when they're guiding their handlers, they've got the extra allowance for their wheelchairs. It's life-changing."

"The Seeing Eye Dogs wheelchair program is an Australian first and Geraldine is one of the first five Seeing Eye Dog handlers to benefit from it."

It's all thanks to this innovative program that I can maintain my independence.

I've had to reinvent myself more than once, but I've found purpose every step of the way.

For anyone who is newly diagnosed with a neurological condition, I would tell them to take the leap of faith. Believe in yourself. Your body may have limitations, but your mind is capable of doing incredible things.

Dr Geraldine Lane
MSWA Client

Congratulations! You found the code word to win Metallica tickets. Make sure to enter the word - **Sandman!**

What is peer support and why does it matter in the MS community?

Peer support is emotional, practical and social support given by people who have lived through similar experiences, in this case, living with multiple sclerosis (MS) or another neurological condition.

It's not just about offering advice, it's about connecting on a deep, human level. When someone who truly understands what you're going through offers their support - it creates a safe and non-judgemental space. It allows people to feel seen, heard and validated in a way that only those who've walked the same road can provide.

For someone newly diagnosed with a neurological condition, peer support groups can be life-changing. I can testify to this, as I was lucky enough to be taken under the wing by an MSWA Nurse and she forever remains in my heart.

A diagnosis can evoke a surge of emotions - fear, uncertainty and a lot of grief. There's a lot to process from confusion about symptoms, treatments and what the future might hold. Having access to someone who has already faced these questions and continues to do so can help us find ways to cope, adapt and even thrive.

Peer support provides emotional support, practical tips for managing daily challenges and reassurance that you're not alone. It's often the difference between feeling lost and finding a path forward. Your peers can also guide you to the right people who can help you in specific situations.



Paint and sip event by Neurological Conditions Community Perth support group.

Only someone who's felt the emotional, physical and mental toll of living with a neurological condition can truly say, "I get it," and mean it.

The Neurological Conditions Community Perth was created by volunteers with MS and other neurological conditions because we care. We know what it's like to be overwhelmed, exhausted and search for answers. We've been there and now we're here for you. This community is a place to ask, vent, share wins or just be. We run coffee catchups and various fun activities including art workshops!

As author Jay Shetty once shared, "sometimes we just need someone to simply be there. Not to fix anything, but to let us feel supported and not alone."

You don't have to have all the answers or put on a brave face here. **This is a space for real connection and real support.**

Jodi Russell
MSWA Client and member of the Client Committee

Scan the QR code to join the group



That's why it's crucial for peer support to be delivered by people with lived experiences. While family and friends often mean well, they can't always understand what it feels like to live in a body that doesn't behave the way it used to, or the fatigue that comes from simply existing.

Spring cleaning your life!



Spring has arrived! It is a season where we traditionally throw open the windows, declutter our homes, scrub down surfaces and create space for something lighter and new. It is a yearly ritual to refresh, repair and reset our surroundings.

But what if we brought that same care and attention inward, towards ourselves?

Difficult relationships, outdated beliefs or ingrained patterns of behaviour can quietly drain our energy and sense of self. Like clutter in a home, these habits and mindsets can build up over time, creating emotional heaviness and blocking us from living with ease and clarity. Spring is symbolic of growth and renewal, inviting us to tend to our inner spaces as lovingly as we do to our physical spaces.

So, what does this look like?

For your mind you might begin with noticing your inner dialogue. What stories have you been telling yourself? Do you speak to yourself with kindness or criticism? Releasing harsh self-talk and embracing more supportive words is like airing out a closed-up room. Everything feels lighter, freer, more alive. Journaling, mindfulness or

even a quiet walk outdoors can help clear your mental clutter and reconnect you with your values and intentions.

Emotional spring cleaning also means making space for joy, rest and play - not just productivity. Ask yourself: What lifts me? What grounds me? What have I been neglecting in the busyness of everyday life? Then, take intentional steps to increase these nourishing activities in your daily rhythm. Prioritise what brings you peace, energy and connection - allow them to take up more space in your life

Just as we assess what to keep or let go of in our homes, it's also a time to reflect on our relationships and boundaries. Take stock of the people in your life - who nourishes you? Who challenges you to grow? Who leaves you feeling drained or diminished? These reflections aren't about blame, they're about honouring your energy, needs and worth.

Setting or adjusting boundaries can be a part this seasonal reset. Boundaries aren't about shutting people out, they're about protecting what's important. They allow us to show up more fully - not out of obligation, but from a place of

authenticity and care. Sometimes, this might mean saying no to things that no longer fit or stepping back from connections that have become one-sided. Other times, it's about reaching out and reconnecting with those who feel like home.

And remember, you don't have to do it all alone. Just as spring cleaning your home can feel easier with someone by your side, the same is true for spring cleaning your inner world. MSWA Counsellors are well placed to walk alongside you in this process - helping you reflect, gently sort through the mental and emotional clutter and find clarity in what stays and what goes. With support, self-compassion and small intentional steps, you can begin to feel lighter and more aligned.

This spring season, may you feel lighter. May you feel more at home in your space, in your relationships and within yourself.

Liesl Murdoch
MSWA Senior Counsellor



Building resilience

"I get knocked down but I get up again!"

(Chumbawamba Tubthumping, 1997)

We all face unavoidable challenges in life and to deal with these setbacks we need to have coping strategies to manage our stress and anxiety. Just like how we can build up our muscles to strengthen our physical resilience and injury prevention.

Research tells us that when we're faced with adversity, our brain is tested. Interestingly, our neural pathways can be 'rewired'. The process of neuroplasticity allows us to learn new skills, adapt to new ways of living and cope with the challenges we face.

By learning coping strategies, we can maintain a sense of control and nurture healthy relationships. Here are some useful strategies you can incorporate in your life:

Talk to others

Talk to someone you trust rather than bottling up your emotions. You don't have to face challenges on your own. Being able to share your concerns and feelings with others helps to take the load off your shoulders.

Practice self-care

Do something that makes you feel good whether you exercise, listen to music or watch a movie that makes you laugh. Activities like these release the 'feel good' hormones - dopamine, endorphins, serotonin and oxytocin add reducing stress and improving your mental health. Overtime you will develop a more positive outlook on life.

Practice gratitude

When you practice being kind to yourself, you build an attitude of gratitude that helps to shift your focus from negative to positive. One simple way to do this is to write down three things that you are grateful for at the end of each day. By doing this you can calm your mind and reset your frame of thought, which in turn improves your sleep and encourages the development of patience and humility.

Goal setting

Setting a goal for yourself keeps you motivated and energised, giving you something to look forward to. Write and share your goals with others, this helps to keep you accountable and future-focused.

Try setting SMART goals - which means setting a goal that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound. Start small, review your goals regularly and most importantly don't forget to celebrate when you achieve your goals!

Social connections

We can often isolate ourselves when life gets hard. It is essential to reach out to the important people in your life, especially during those difficult times.

Effective emotional regulation

Emotions such as anger, sadness and fear are normal especially when we are overwhelmed and stressed. A resilient person is more likely to recognise that these feelings are temporary and can be managed.

If life hits you hard and you are struggling to bounce back, MSWA offers a range of Wellbeing workshops, teaching you easy-to-follow practices and strategies to enhance your overall wellbeing.

Trudy Tuckey
MSWA Counsellor

If you're interested in our Wellbeing service, reach out to MSWA Wellbeing Manager michaela.mundy@mswa.org.au or speak with your Client Liaison Coordinator.

The importance of anti-inflammatory vegetables plus, a nourishing recipe!

Neurological conditions are frequently associated with inflammation in the body, which is why dietary changes can play an important role in supporting neurological health.

In MS, for example, the immune system mistakenly targets the protective layer around nerves, leading to damage and inflammation. This inflammation can contribute to a variety of symptoms, such as fatigue, cognitive challenges and coordination difficulties.

Antioxidant Chicken Pasta

This antioxidant-rich recipe features nutrient-packed anti-inflammatory vegetables like broccoli, kale, spinach and cherry tomatoes, complemented by the healthy fats of Australian extra virgin olive oil, walnuts and high fibre lentil pasta.

Ingredients

Antioxidant Chicken Pasta

- **150g** lentil pasta of your choice
- **500g** broccoli, washed well and cut into small florets
- **250g** chicken breast
- **200g** cherry tomatoes, roughly diced

Antioxidant Pesto

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Australian extra virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup walnuts
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup grated parmesan cheese
- **100g** baby spinach leaves (can use frozen)
- **100g** kale (can use frozen)
- **1** large bunch of fresh basil (~30g)
- **2** cloves garlic or 1 tsp diced garlic
- **1** tbsp lemon juice
- **1** tbsp water
- **1** tsp Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper to taste



MSWA Dietitians are here to provide practical advice and support to increase your intake of anti-inflammatory vegetables and how to better your overall health and wellbeing.

To get you started, here's a simple, nutrient-packed recipe that features ingredients known for their anti-inflammatory benefits!

Method

1. Cook pasta in a large saucepan of boiling water as per the packet instructions or until just tender. Add broccoli in the last five minutes of cooking time and cook until slightly soft. Drain and rinse, then set aside.
2. Dice chicken breast into small cubes and cook in a large non-stick pan until no pink remains. If you're short on time, you can opt for pre-cooked chicken breast from the meats section of your local supermarket and skip this step!
3. To make antioxidant pesto, process all ingredients in a food processor to form a paste. You can add salt and pepper to taste as you please.
4. Add pasta, pesto and cherry tomatoes into your large non-stick pan with your chicken and cook through until warm. Divide into four portions and enjoy!

Energy: 2,000 kJ, 35g protein, 25g fat (5g saturated), 11g fibre, 300mg sodium.

MSWA Dietitians can support you with tailored dietary advice, resources and information to help you maintain your best health and wellbeing. Reach out to our team via dietitians@mswa.org.au.

Misty Reinkowsky
MSWA Senior Dietitian

The care-cuddle we call palliative care

Most people hear the words 'palliative care' and tend to shy away with fear, believing it means the end of life is near. But palliative care is not about giving up – it's about adding an extra layer of support to help people live as fully and comfortably as possible, no matter their diagnosis or stage of illness.

Palliative care simply focuses on comfort, support and quality of life. It's for anyone living with a serious illness – at any age or stage – and can be provided alongside treatments aimed at managing the illness.

Palliative care helps people feel better day to day. It can ease pain, manage symptoms like fatigue or nausea and support emotional, spiritual or practical concerns such as future planning. The goal is to improve wellbeing – not just physically, but holistically.

MSWA Nurses play a central and compassionate role in palliative care. Often the most consistent point of contact, our Nurses provide expert symptom management, emotional support and advocacy to ensure care reflects what matters most to the person receiving it. They listen, coordinate care and offer both clinical skill and human connection.

Palliative care is delivered by a collaborative team which may include specialists, nurses, social workers, allied health professionals, spiritual care providers, pharmacists, general practitioners and more. Together, they tailor support to meet individual goals and needs. The level of care can be increased or reduced as needed, depending on changing circumstances and preferences.

Our High-Support Accommodation offers 24/7 palliative care support, ensuring that individuals receive timely, compassionate care around the clock. Whether someone is at home or living in one of our residences, we are committed to honouring comfort, dignity and choice – every step of the way.

Palliative care is not just about the end – it's about the now: helping people live well, with care that sees and supports the whole person.

As we support individuals through this phase of life, it's also important to consider their wishes for the future.

In our next article, we explore end of life planning, including the value of Advance Care Directives, substitute decision-makers, other ways to ensure a person's voice is respected – even if they can't speak for themselves.

Scan for more resources



Madison Dobels

MSWA Residential Neurological Nurse



Planning ahead: Understanding your legal health documents

As we walk alongside individuals navigating serious illness, it's important to not only focus on comfort and quality of life, but also to plan for the future. At MSWA, our Nurses regularly support individuals and families impacted by neurological conditions that may affect a person's ability to make decisions over time.

Planning ahead ensures that your values and wishes remain central to your care, even if you lose the ability to speak for yourself. Having the right legal documents in place can also relieve stress on loved ones during already difficult times.

Here are four key tools to help you stay in control of your future:

Advance Health Directive (AHD)

An AHD allows you to record your preferences for medical treatment if you are no longer able to communicate. This may include decisions about life support, resuscitation, pain relief and other interventions. It's also a place to express your personal values and what quality of life means to you – guiding healthcare teams and family members to act in accordance with your wishes.

Visit healthywa.wa.gov.au/AdvanceHealthDirectives to find out more.

Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA)

An EPA allows you to appoint someone to manage your financial and legal affairs if you lose capacity to make decisions of this nature. This may include managing bank accounts, paying bills, or handling property transactions.

Note: this authority does not extend to health or personal care decisions.

Visit wa.gov.au/service/justice/civil-law/enduring-power-of-attorney to find out more.



Will

A Will is a legal document that ensures your assets, belongings, and responsibilities (like guardianship or dependents) are managed according to your wishes after you pass away. Without one, decisions may be made by the courts, potentially causing delays and distress for your family.

Visit wa.gov.au/service/justice/civil-law/make-will-public-trustee to find out more.

Why this matters

Neurological conditions can progress gradually or occur suddenly. By putting these legal documents in place, you protect your voice, ease the emotional load on loved ones and stay in control of your future.

Speak with your MSWA Nurse, general practitioner, solicitor or local public trustee to begin the conversation. Planning ahead is for anyone who wants to make their choices known and ensure the people they trust are empowered to act on their behalf.

Nadene Doherty

MSWA Neurological Liaison Nurse

Climbing for a cause: MSWA Step Up

On 22 June 2025, more than 900 participants climbed for a cause at Central Park Tower in Perth for the 18th annual MSWA Step Up. Plus, for the first time in years, the winter weather held off and we finally made it to the roof of the building, taking in the breathtaking view!

The event was not only about the physical achievement of climbing all 1,103 steps of the tallest building in Perth but also about making a meaningful impact for West Australians living with neurological conditions.

The stair-climbing event raised an astounding \$191,605! Of course, this would not have been possible without the incredible support from proud supporters and most importantly, our fundraising community. A special thank you goes out to Central Park and City of Perth for their generous contributions to the event.

A big pat on the back for our highest fundraising individual, Sophie O'Donoghue raising \$3,600! As well, we'd like to congratulate the 'The Lunatics' who took first place as the highest fundraising team with an enormous \$18,366 raised. Plus our Best Dressed participant, Peter Ritchie, scored a cookbook and spice pack, kindly donated by Outer Spice. Outer Spice was founded by Emma and Amy, who are both MSWA Clients.

With breathtaking rooftop views, a buzzing atmosphere and a whole lot of community spirit, the 2025 MSWA Step Up was an absolute hit this year and what an impact we've made!

Thank you to everyone who climbed, donated, volunteered or spectated, we couldn't have done it without you. See you again in 2026!

Samantha Judkins

MSWA Senior Fundraising Events Officer



Wojciech (right) with partner.

Strength beyond limits

As a first-time participant for the MSWA Step Up, Wojciech set himself a bold challenge to climb to the top of Central Park Tower 12 times.

Diagnosed with MS two years ago, the 33-year-old was determined to achieve the ambitious goal and more importantly, to prove to himself that he is not limited by his condition.

Wojciech recalls the overwhelming emotions he felt when he first saw the MRI scans revealing the lesions in his brain.

"It's scary. It's unfair. But it was also eye-opening and empowering. It made me realise that there are people not as lucky as I am and I wanted to do something about it." Wojciech shares.

Motivated by this mission, Wojciech began training for an Ironman with his girlfriend, successfully completing the race and raising an incredible \$11,000 to MSWA in 2023.

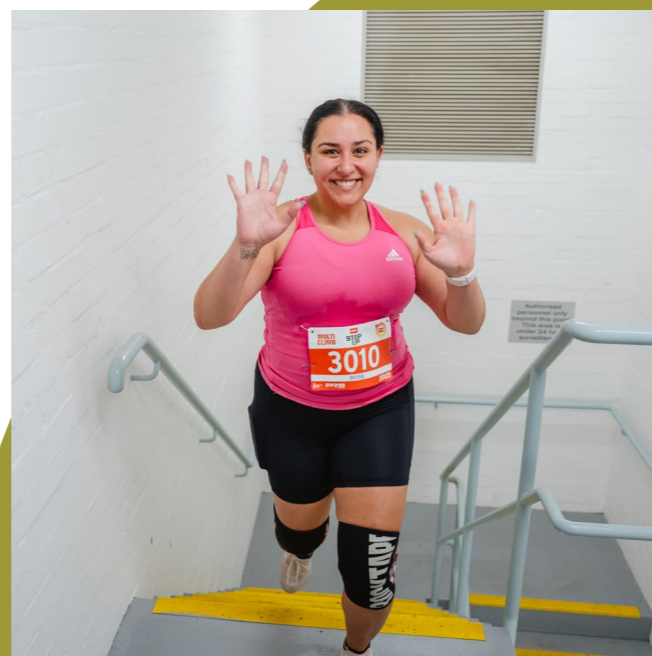
Itching for his next physical challenge, he knew that the MSWA Step Up would be the perfect opportunity to push his limits and inspire others to take part in the cause that resonates with him so deeply.

Wojciech smashed his goals, climbing Central Park Tower 15 times and placing second overall for the Multi-Climb category, an enormous feat!

"I will not be defined by my condition. I can and will achieve my goals, no matter how far-fetched."

Tammie Chu

MSWA Content Marketing Officer



Best Dressed, Peter Ritchie.

Scan to view
the gallery



MSWA Accommodation Open Day

In a MSWA first, we welcomed 30 healthcare professionals into our High-Support Accommodation and Respite homes for an exclusive behind-the-scenes experience at the MSWA Accommodation Open Day.

The inaugural event gave industry professionals the opportunity to tour our purpose-built facility, connect with our dedicated Residential Staff and see firsthand the specialist 24/7 care and support we provide to Western Australians living with neurological conditions.

Held in June across our metropolitan and regional locations, including Albany, Butler, Fern River, Hamilton Hill, and Treendale Gardens, guests were taken on a guided tour, with opportunities to ask questions along the way. They also had the chance to meet some of our residential Clients and hear about their experiences first-hand.



This was a valuable opportunity for guests to truly see and understand the warmth, safety and sense of community that underpin MSWA services and High-Support Accommodation.

Excitingly, MSWA continues to grow and expand our High-Support Accommodation, with our Shenton Park Accommodation (Montario Quarter) in the final stages of the build. Located in the leafy green suburb of Shenton Park, this new purpose-built facility will welcome a further 20 Clients to live as independently as possible, while staying closely connected within the neurological community.

If you or someone you know could benefit from MSWA's High-Support Accommodation or Respite services we'd love to hear from you!

Bonny French
MSWA Senior Marketing Officer

Scan the QR code to find out more!



Our Community

Running beyond limits: 400km challenge for MSWA

(L-R) James, Cumoram, Mitchell, Ryan and Matthew.

In August, a group of everyday runners from Desires Movement Run Club pushed their bodies and minds further than ever before and ran more than 400 kilometres each, from Osborne Park to Bluff Knoll, over just five days. Their journey finished with a symbolic summit climb of Bluff Knoll – all in support of Western Australians living with MS.

The challenge wasn't just a physical feat. It was deeply personal.

For Desires Movement founder Ryan Fazzalari, the mission hit close to home. His mum, Joanna, was diagnosed with MS at just 34 years old. Now 55, she continues to face unpredictable and often invisible symptoms with remarkable resilience.

"I've seen how hard it is," Ryan shares. "But my mum never gives up. That's what inspires me to keep going."

The runners who joined Ryan on this journey were Cumoram Desmond, James Shaw, Josh Fabila, Matthew Fabila and Mitchell Cannon – some made the full 400km, some were forced to stop just short, but every single team member gave everything until their bodies said no more.

"While we have the privilege to run, we do it for those who can't," Ryan said. "Every step, every blister, every breakdown was in honour of the thousands of Australians living with MS."

The team aimed to raise \$10,000 for MSWA but surpassed that goal even before taking their first steps. By the time they had reached the summit of Bluff Knoll, they had raised \$13,545

"My son ran 400 kilometres in just five days – with a group of his amazing mates – to raise awareness and support for people like me living with MS," Joanna shared.

"Watching my son take on something so physically and mentally demanding – fills me with overwhelming pride. These young men aren't just running across the state; they're running with meaning. MS pushes us in ways most people never see.

They didn't just raise money – they raised awareness. And reminded us all how strong we really are."

Others in the MSWA community have been equally moved. Friends of Joanna also shared what the run means to them.

"Living with MS means waking up not knowing what your body will do that day," said Anne Cooper. "These boys are running for us when we sometimes can't walk. That means everything."

Michelle Hughes added her thoughts about living with a sometimes-invisible illness.

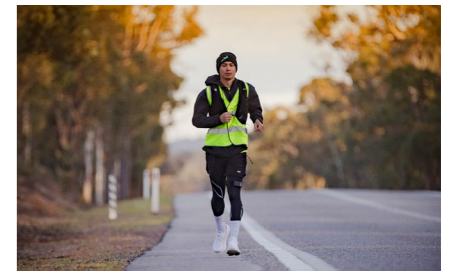
"Most people don't understand. It's not about being in a wheelchair – it's so much more. What the boys did was so powerful."

Together, these words tell a story of courage, community and hope – a reminder that while MS may be invisible, the strength behind the fight is very real.

When you choose to go beyond your limits – anything is possible.

Trish Watson

MSWA Community Fundraising Events Officer



Everything Outreach

Rummikub rumble

We know how much our Clients love the word puzzle board game, Rummikub and we're very excited to host our inaugural Rummikub tournament!

Held at the Butler Services Centre, Clients from Butler, Wilson and Beechboro Outreach competed against one another for the first place! Congratulations to the Wilson Outreach Clients who were crowned champions of the tournament!



Symbols of strength

Our Rockingham Outreach Men Group had an absolute blast creating their own family crests. They all put in so much thought and meaning behind each of their designs, it was great to see what the Clients feel represented them and their family.



Christmas in July

In true Aussie fashion, we celebrated Christmas across our Services Centres in the month of July. Clients and staff were encouraged to wear their best winter sweaters and had fun creating some Christmas crafts and taking part in trivia quizzes!



Accommodation adventures

Spies, snacks and suspense

Action and comedy stole the show at our Hamilton Hill residents' movie night, delivering laughs from start to finish. The snack bar didn't disappoint either, the team served up tiramisu and popcorn, which made the night even sweeter!



Stars in the making!

We were excited to invite Butler residents and Clients to step into the spotlight for our recent photoshoot. A huge thank you to all our Client stars for helping to showcase the vibrant and diverse neuro community we're proud to serve. With talent like this, we're pretty sure we've got some stars in the making!



MSWA Shenton Park: A new chapter

Currently under construction, MSWA Shenton Park (Montario Quarter) is slowly breathing new life into the former Shenton Park Rehabilitation Hospital site, which dates back to 1893. The hospital was originally constructed for infectious disease treatment and included support for those affected by spinal injuries. This new residence marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in the site's century-long history.

Surrounding the site, the street names have been aptly titled after doctors and nurses from the former hospital, a nod to the rich history of the site whilst reestablishing itself as a place of its own. We're so excited to see this residence come to life and acknowledge the Department of Health's financial contribution to the project.

An update on MSWA Golden Bay

We're committed to delivering another project that truly sets a new benchmark. While construction is not expected to commence for another two years on MSWA Golden Bay, this extended timeline is allowing us to consider new innovations. This approach has deepened our partnerships and allowed us to refine the finer design details. The insights we're gaining are helping shape solutions that will serve MSWA for the long term, ensuring the project is not only inclusive, but impactful, for years to come.

Steve Corbett
MSWA Lead Manager of Property Development and Construction

News in brief



Sailing against the tide

MSWA Client, Rob Cridge, had the unique opportunity to share his story at the Maritime Exploration Evenings in Albany. Diagnosed with MS 30 years ago, Rob shared of his powerful lived experience with a neurological condition and the transformative power of sailing. This has led to many doors opening for Rob, including the World Disabled Sailing Titles and a TEDx Talk titled "Thriving with MS".

Rob was also joined by Jamie Dunross OAM, a Paralympic gold medallist and world record-holding sailor. Interestingly, Jamie introduced Rob to the world of sailing, igniting his passion for the sport.



Leave a lasting legacy

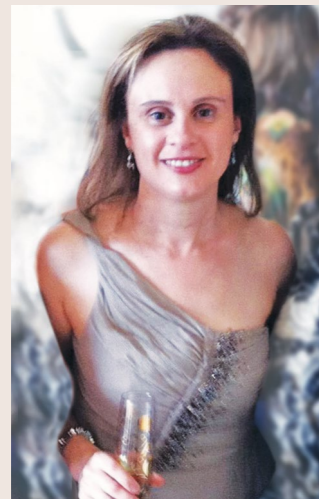
By leaving a gift in your Will, you can help us continue providing vital care and work towards causes, cures and better treatments for people living with neurological conditions.

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



Angela's great gift

Angela was a deeply loved daughter and sister, and a passionate advocate for healthcare and medical research. As a registered nurse, she devoted her life to caring for others with compassion and kindness.

In 2021, Angela was diagnosed with glioblastoma multiforme, an aggressive form of brain cancer, and sadly passed away in February 2022.

True to her values, Angela left a generous gift in her Will to MSWA, directed towards vital research. Her legacy continues to make a meaningful impact, helping to advance medical understanding and offer hope to others facing neurological conditions.

Save the date

Book and save on your stay at Treendale Gardens Respite!

Offer ends 31 December 2025

For a limited time, MSWA will match your Respite Accommodation stay at Treendale Gardens!

Meaning, when you book up to seven days, you can access additional days to extend your stay, inclusive of roundtrip transport transfer - free of charge*.

If this sounds like something you might be interested in, get in touch with your MSWA Client Liaison Coordinator today to discuss funding options and available dates.

*Offer is limited to availability and only applies at MSWA Respite Treendale Gardens. Transport transfer to and from Treendale Gardens inclusive of offer. Offer ends 31 December 2025, all bookings and additional days must be used before this time. Eligibility criteria apply.

Butler Christmas Market

Friday, 21 November 2025

Believe it or not, Christmas is just around the corner and MSWA is getting into the festive spirit! We're inviting stallholders to join our community Christmas Market in Butler and showcase their unique gifts, crafts and creations. To express your interest, please contact

community.engagement@mswa.org.au




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.

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



Master of tickets: See Metallica live in Perth!

Saturday, 1 November 2025

The rock legends, Metallica, are hitting Perth for one night only, and we're giving one lucky reader the chance to score a double pass to their sold-out show! This massive stadium show marks Metallica's first return to WA in over a decade - don't miss your chance to experience their greatest hits live.

All you have to do is **find the special Metallica related code word** in this edition of Bulletin and enter via the QR code. Good luck!



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



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

2025 MSWA Step Up



Life not limits