



MSWA

Life not limits

Bulletin

YOUR MSWA MAGAZINE

MAKURU | WINTER 2025

mswa.org.au

Inside

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- International Nurses Day
- Honouring Ros Harman
- Clients making the call!

*Art Without Limits exhibition.
Read more on page 16.*



Life not limits

WILSON CENTRE

29 Parkhill Way, Wilson 6107
9365 4888

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

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

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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Help us reduce our environmental impact by going digital and connect with more engaging content. Email us at marketing@mswa.org.au to sign up.

Welcome to Bulletin Makuru 2025 edition

The Noongar Season "Makuru" is the coldest and wettest time of the year. Makuru is the time for animals to pair up in preparation for breeding in the upcoming months. It is also when blueberry lily, purple flags, and weeping peppermint flowers begin to flourish.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.

From our CEO

Melanie Kiely

It always feels like no time passes before we are compiling another Bulletin, and yet so much has happened in that time.

We have just had the honour of drawing the most recent MSWA Mega MEGA Home Lottery - our biggest grand prize ever! This lottery sold out three weeks early, which is no mean feat considering the current cost of living challenges. I continue to find it so heartwarming how generous West Australian's are, in supporting our community despite their own challenges.

Our lovely winner Sanju, like all the winners before him, says he buys a ticket to support our cause despite the financial constraints and now it has changed his family's life. Thank you all for your continued belief and support. We need it more than ever. With pressures facing the sector and over 50% of NDIS providers making a loss - which only goes up every year - our lottery is our saving grace. We need to focus on how we can bring more discipline to what we do, ensuring MSWA is still around and flourishing in 10 to 20 years. We look forward to discussing these ideas with you and we will be sending out invitations on specific topics as we progress along this path.

To future-proof MSWA and increase our impact, we continue with our other fundraising efforts. For the 2025 MSWA Ocean Ride, we set out on a new route that passed by the river, starting and finishing at the same spot, making it easier for our participants to navigate the route. I loved it but was exhausted after riding 25km! Thank you to everyone who came to take part or support. We raised over \$300K and it was a wonderful event for our community. Read more about the fantastic event on page 29.



Crossing the finish line at the 2025 MSWA Ocean Ride.



We also have the MSWA Step Up coming up on 22 June which is another opportunity for us all to come together, push ourselves and our limits, and raise some money. As I puff my way to the top, I will keep reminding myself the research we raise money for is improving treatments and helping to diagnose people earlier and improving lifestyles.

In addition to all this, we hosted a fundraiser with the support of the State Buildings to expand the MSWA NeuroCare Nurse service to offer 24/7 care. It was a wonderful evening attended by Clients, our Nurses, and many influential people in Perth who were all incredibly generous. With the money raised, the we can begin expanding care to include some after-hours, overnight, and weekend support for MSWA Clients across the state. Moving forward, we hope to maintain and increase this every year. Find out more on page 25.



NeuroCare Nurse fundraising evening.



(L-R) MSA Chair George Pampacos, Lynda Whitton, Melanie, Horst Bemmerl.

Looking more broadly, now that we have gone through both the state and federal elections, my hope is that this will bring greater certainty and stability - which will lead to a clear timeline and considered decisions regarding the NDIS review recommendations. There is a concern that funding is being restricted without clear communication and in spite of the unique challenges of neurological conditions. We will continue to advocate for this and against any changes that are negatively impacting on the quality of life of our Clients and community.

Additionally, the rollout of the Support at Home program has been postponed to 1 November 2025. This will allow more time for aged care providers to prepare their Clients, support their workers and get their systems ready for the changes. It will also give the government more time to finalise key operational and digital processes, and for Parliament to consider supporting legislation that will enable the new Act to operate effectively. We will keep you updated as the year progresses.

On a celebratory note, I joined our amazing community in Bunbury to award the 2024 John Studdy Award to MSWA Client, Lynda Whitton for her long-standing contribution to supporting the MS community. It was such a lovely morning and so nice to see everyone, honour Lynda and have a good laugh.

On the subject of people who have made a significant contribution to MSWA, we held a heartfelt memorial in honour of Ros Harman. Once the Chair of our Board, she was an incredible contributor to MSWA with her time and wisdom. In fact, Ros was also a recipient of the John Studdy Award in 2018 and very justly so. We will all miss you Ros. We send our deepest sympathies to her family and her daughter.

Lastly, as you may have seen on the front cover, we held the *Art Without Limits* exhibition during the week of World MS Day, 30 May, with opening nights hosted at Central Park Tower in Perth and Stirling Street Art Centre in Bunbury. In preparation for this day, MSWA Client and artist, Hank Gidney, ran art workshops to help and guide some of our aspiring artists in our community. I hear they were so well received that everyone wants more! Not surprising given Hank's amazing manner but also his artistic talent as shown in the giant mural he completed at Scarborough, showing his creative interpretation of his MS symptoms.

In closing, I hope you enjoy this edition of Bulletin and thank you again for all your support, ideas and feedback. We rely on it to keep getting better in these challenging times.

Be part of the Neuro Collective!



Since its inception, MSWA has had a clear aim to bring together people living with a neurological condition in a community of support and service.

So, we're proud to introduce and invite you to join the **Neuro Collective!**

The Neuro Collective is a safe space for meaningful connection, belonging, and support for the neuro community - no matter your diagnosis, your journey, or where exactly you fit into the picture.

This initiative has been shaped through Client and community input, and we will continue to seek feedback to refine this pilot program to best fit our communities needs. When asked what 'community' means and how MSWA can better service this gap, the working group responded with:

- People who truly understand what you are going through
- Options available to cater to a broad spectrum of people and needs
- Wider than the MSWA community - other neuro, family, friends and carers
- Value for people without funding

Why join the Neuro Collective?

By becoming a "Connector", you will become part of a vibrant neuro community network full of Connectors!

You'll also unlock exclusive benefits, including:

- First access to our Synapse peer support digital portal - coming soon!
- Discounts, benefits and entry into monthly competitions and giveaways from MSWA partners
- Invitations to exclusive events
- Be the first to hear about our new Community Engagement programs
- Opportunities to participate in clinical research and surveys
- Monthly emails with the latest news from the neuro community
- Helpful tools and resources to support your journey
- Free entry to MSWA fundraising events

For new Connectors

Connectors will enjoy their first 12 months of membership free! Join the Neuro Collective before 31 September 2025 and you'll be in the draw to win...

- **Overnight stay at COMO The Treasury, Heritage Room**
Indulge in a luxurious escape with drinks on arrival, complimentary in-room refreshments, and a gourmet breakfast at Post. Plus, receive a \$250 gift voucher.
- **2 x \$250 State Buildings gift voucher**
Treat yourself to an unforgettable experience at one of the State Buildings' renowned restaurants.

Who can become a Connector?

Anyone in the neuro community can join including MSWA Clients, carers, family members of MSWA Clients, or anyone who lives with a neurological condition.

Difference between Neuro Collective and MSWA Membership

Our MSWA Membership still remains as an option to you, and this is a governance role in our organisation.

To find out more about MSWA Membership and how you can become a member, please visit our website.

Emily Ace

MSWA Community Engagement Manager



Become a Connector!

Clients making the call!

The MSWA Mega Home Lottery wrapped up on Monday, 5 May, following a major campaign featuring our largest Grand Prize package to date. But before the Grand Prize draw, the Early Bird and Mega Cash Prize draws took place with the help of some very talented Clients.

Assisting CEO Melanie Kiely, Stephen helped call the winner of the \$1.4M Applecross apartment, while Nick and Martin announced the winning number for the \$500,000 cash prize. Sophie then had the honour of calling the lucky recipients of the \$4.2M Grand Prize Home.

Whilst Nick and Martin met through Butler Outreach, Sophie and Stephen both attend our MSWA After Hours peer support group. After Hours is a new pilot program focused on bringing together like-minded, working professionals navigating a neurological diagnosis to create a community of support. The group catches up every second month for casual after work drinks and nibbles in the Perth CBD.

For Sophie and Stephen, finding connection with others who truly understood their journey proved to be life changing.

As Sophie was only 27 when she received the diagnosis of MS, her whole future was upended.



Sophie holding the Grand Prize winner announcement card.

"When I received my diagnosis, I literally dropped my phone and collapsed like someone out of a dramatic film. What I wish I knew then, and I know now, is that I can continue to live a full and active life."

"Additionally, I have joined a community through MSWA of other likeminded people. The power of this support group, and the support of the health professionals surrounding me, specifically my neurologist, cannot be underestimated," she said.

Through the After Hours group, Sophie has found a network of West Aussies who are also navigating life with an unexpected neurological diagnosis. This newfound community, combined with the guidance of healthcare professionals and neurologists, has played a vital role in her journey so far.

I want other people to know that a diagnosis does not mean your life is over - far from it.

"In Western Australia in 2025, treatment is so advanced that you may sometimes forget that you have it! In many ways, my life is richer now because of my diagnosis."

"I am far kinder to myself and have more appreciation for the little things in life. It has given me greater perspective than I ever would have had in my late 20s."

We thank Stephen, Nick, Martin and Sophie for their assistance in helping us call the lucky major prize winners of the MSWA Mega Home Lottery.

If you are interested in learning more about our new After Hours program, scan the QR code below:



MSWA After Hours program



(L-R) Stephen, Robert the Early Bird winner and CEO Melanie.



(L-R) Nick and Martin calling the Mega Cash Prize winner.

Regional Nursing and Dietetics Team highly commended



Our dedicated and passionate workforce makes a difference every day in the lives of thousands of West Aussies living with a neurological condition. So, it's no surprise that the MSWA Regional Nursing Team and MSWA Dietetics Team were recognised at the 2025 WA Disability Support Awards

More than 700 guests attended the gala dinner at Crown Perth to celebrate the finalists and winners from the awards. The 2025 WA Disability Support Awards recognises the commitment of individuals, teams and organisations in delivering exceptional support to people with disability.

There were an impressive 122 nominations submitted this year across nine categories. Each nomination told a powerful story of passion and meaningful impact on the lives of people with disability, their families and communities.

Minister for Disability Services, the Hon. Hannah Beazley MLA shared, "I am delighted to congratulate all the winners and nominees of the 2025 Disability Support Awards and recognise the huge difference they make to the lives of Western Australians living with disability."

"These awards shine a light on our local disability workforce and the extraordinary people within it who are committed to providing the highest quality care and support to people with disability, their families, and carers."



MSWA Regional Nursing Team and Dietetics Team.

A warm congratulations to our very own

MSWA Regional Nursing Team MSWA Dietetics Team

Finalists in Excellence in Regional and Remote Support

The MSWA Regional Nursing Team has demonstrated exceptional innovation and dedication in addressing the unique challenges of delivering healthcare to the neuro community in regional and remote WA.

The neuro community in regional and remote WA face considerable barriers, including limited access to specialist services, staff shortages, and geographical isolation. Despite these challenges, the RNT has developed a holistic and collaborative approach to ensure MSWA Clients receive consistent, high-quality care.

Spearheaded by Clinical Nurse Manager, Nimisha Baird, the small, dedicated team of Neurological Nurses includes Emily Koop, Karen Leggatt and Nadene Doherty who together manage a caseload of over 300 Clients.

Through a combination of telehealth, home visits, country trips and targeted programs, the team ensures our neuro community receive appropriate chronic disease management. In turn, it improves the physical and mental wellbeing of Clients, allowing them to remain in their homes and communities, reducing the need for hospitalisations.

Michael, an MSWA Client living with MS and his wife, Memma lives in Waroona, approximately an hour away from Bunbury. They've felt an immense sense of support knowing that the team is just a phone call away.

"Michael and I have a good connection with the nurses. We can talk to them very easily about any of our problems. It feels like they're just part of the family," Memma shared.

The team also established the NeuroConnect Group to improve coordination between service providers in regional WA. This group is a collaboration between neurological care providers to share insights and enhance referral pathways.

Highly Commended in the Allied Health Professionals Award

The MSWA Dietetics Team acknowledged that there was a gap for a standardised assessment tool for nutrition and food services tailored to people with neurological conditions.

The diet for someone living with a neurological condition is extremely important, as food needs to be modified textually due to the increased risk of dysphagia, choking and swallowing difficulties. Previously, such tools had been developed for sectors such as aged care, but not within the disability sector.

In response, MSWA Dietetics Team, which includes Dietitians Misty Reinkowsky, Jodie Roberts, Hannah Papendorf, Mineh Burn and led by Speech Pathology and Dietetics Manager, Pamela Windram developed a tool to assess, review and provide recommendations for menus and recipes. This new tool was utilised across all five MSWA High-Support Accommodations catering to over 46 Clients.

Utilising evidence-based nutrition standards and resources, the tool goes into specificities such as time the meal is served, nutritional adequacy, presentation, dining experience and budget of each site. Additionally, they provided education and training for all cooks.

The Dietetics Team provided a comprehensive rationale for the importance of nutrition with relevance to specific Client's health and wellbeing outcomes, as well as promoting long-term quality of life. Clients living in the accommodation were consulted during the review process to consider specific likes, dislikes, allergies, intolerances and nutrition requirements. The Clients feedback was segmented into variety & choice, preferences, meal quality, environment and were asked to provide an overall rating, to be reviewed in 12 months' time. The team then developed a holistic understanding of Client's experience, and ensured the next steps were designed with individuals in mind.

We're incredibly proud of our team for their dedication to provide high-quality service, putting our Clients at the heart of the service delivery.

Honouring Ros Harman

The entire MSWA staff and neuro community is deeply saddened to hear of the passing of former MSWA Board Chair, longstanding Bulletin contributor and Client, Ros Harman.

Ros Harman was a member of MSWA for 34 years. Throughout her life, she was the walking embodiment of MSWA's purpose to empower people with neurological conditions to live their best lives. Ros spent 18 years on the MSWA Board, with 18 months of those as President.

Growing up in the coastal town of Albany, she later moved to Perth to pursue her tertiary education in teaching.

In 1988, just after her 26th birthday, she noticed herself feeling uncoordinated and clumsy when playing basketball and walking to the high school where she worked as an English teacher.

This sparked Ros' first visit to a neurologist's clinic, where after a series of tests and scans, she was diagnosed with MS. MRIs had just been made available as a diagnostic tool for MS, and Ros was one of the first people in Perth to be scanned for MS lesions.

Much-loved Bulletin contributor

It was not long after her diagnosis that she encountered MSWA. One of the first people from the organisation she met was Dr Greg Brotherson, former Board Member, co-founder and editor of Bulletin for 36 years.

"He found out that I was an English teacher and encouraged me to start writing articles for Bulletin," Ros recalled.

Since 2000, Ros became a regular and much-loved contributor to the Bulletin. She later stepped into the role as a guest editor for the publication in 2020.

Ros was passionate about writing and public speaking, and many Clients have followed her honest and informative articles about living with a neurological condition. She never shied away from sharing her personal stories, struggles and lived experience with MS. Despite the challenges, Ros' writing shines with positivity, optimism and a constant drive to make a difference. Her sharp wit, sense of humour and vibrant personality is always evident throughout her work.

Authoring over 80 articles, Ros shared snippets of her daily life including meeting one of her favourite celebrities and writers, Tim Fergusson.

Ros recounted, "when I finally get to meet Tim as he signed my book, he mentioned seeing me as we crossed the road earlier. I tried not to swoon in case I fell out of my wheelchair!"

President and Board member

As a long-time Client, Ros brought invaluable insight to the Board, shaped largely by her lived experience. Throughout her tenure, her ambition was to support the organisation's mission: advancing the development of new facilities for people with neurological conditions, enhancing services, and championing research.

She continued giving back to the community, before stepping down in 2022 due to her MND diagnosis.

A resilient advocate

"Sometimes I like to imagine a world that was designed for people with disability. Can you imagine that?", the opening of Ros' 2021 Bulletin piece, *Imagine*.

"It's not too many years ago that people with disability were expected to stay at home. Out of sight, out of mind."

Ros has always been a strong advocate for accessibility in homes, local neighbourhoods and especially in public spaces.

In 2006, she was awarded the Disability Sector Media Award for her *Universal Kitchen* article in the Spice Magazine, highlighting the daily challenges overcome by people with disabilities in a light-hearted approach.

After dining at restaurants, she would publish reviews highlighting the accessibility or lack thereof at these establishments. She often spoke up when things weren't right.

"I like to imagine a different world. In a world that was designed with more thought for people with disability, there would be no barriers to stop anyone from doing whatever they wanted or needed to live a fulfilling life."

She took it a step further by joining the South Perth Advisory Committee after facing accessibility challenges that made it difficult to navigate her local neighbourhood in her wheelchair.

Ros' advocacy and meritorious service were also recognised with MS Australia's 2018 John Studdy Award. This honour acknowledged Ros' governance and leadership to fund MS research, in addition to being an inspiration and ambassador for the MS community.



A final farewell

MSWA hosted a special tribute for Ros where Clients, staff and the wider community were invited. The touching ceremony celebrated Ros' impressive accolades over her life and most importantly, her resiliency and kindness.

At the tribute, Chris, Ros' sister shared a few words from Ros' 2018 Bulletin article *The Day I Changed*.

"I would try being a pessimist, but I just know I would be no good at it.

Of course, if I think for too long there are a few things I could whinge about, but I usually try not to think for too long.

I could whinge about using a wheelchair to get around, but the alternative is to not get around, so I don't.

I could whinge about the difficulty of finding ACROD parking when I go out, but I'm glad to be going out, so I don't. I sometimes just park across two normal parking bays instead and no one's complained yet, or at least not to my face.

I could whinge about buildings that don't have wheelchair access, but I don't. Oh, hang on - yes I do, but that is perfectly reasonable to whinge about so it doesn't count.

I could whinge about having MS, and sometimes I do, but I've got a life to live so I haven't got energy for whinging too long.

Like most people, I want to be happy."

It's hard to summarise all the amazing feats Ros Harman achieved in her lifetime, but one thing is certain - her legacy lives on, and the impact she's had on the neuro community is immeasurable.

Ros' dedication, advocacy and commitment to MSWA left a lasting impact, and she will be fondly remembered. We extend our deepest sympathies to her family, friends, and everyone whose lives she touched.



**Scan to read
Ros' past
Bulletin pieces**

Helping people speak and think again: *Taking the NADIApp to country!*

Thinking, speaking, and communicating are central to everyday life. When these abilities are affected by neurological damage due to multiple sclerosis (MS), stroke, Parkinson's disease, aquired brain injury, or even dementia, the impact on work, relationships with friends and family, confidence, and everyday life can be profound.

Narrative and Discourse Intervention in Aphasia (NADIApp), is an innovative speech therapy approach designed by speech pathologists to help people with neurological impairments regain everyday communication skills. Using structured, evidence-based techniques with flexible, engaging activities like storytelling, recounting events, and expressing opinions, NADIApp is tailored to the individual and aimed at improving real-life speaking and thinking.

What sets NADIApp apart is its lasting impact. Research has so far shown that people not only improve right after therapy but continue to make gains five weeks later. Its success has brought hope to people with communication challenges, their families and therapists alike.

MSWA played a key role in NADIApp's evolution, funding the development of the NADIApp, a digital version co-designed by MSWA Clients, staff, researchers and developers. The result? A tool that's effective, user-friendly and already enhancing communication, social and work participation, and quality of life.

The next goal is enabling NADIApp for remote sessions where the Client and therapist are in separate locations – crucial for people in rural areas. Researchers also plan to adapt NADIApp for people with MS and Parkinson's disease who face similar challenges.

With its solid research base and strong community collaboration, NADIApp is hoping to change lives. With the NADIApp, it has the potential to reach even more people, wherever they are.

Professor Anne Whitworth
University of Tasmania

Julia Tran
MSWA Research Coordinator



To find out more information
about the NADIApp scan
the QR code

Australasian Neurological Conference and Expo

The Australasian Neurological Conference and Expo, held on 1-2 May 2025, brought together 275 attendees - including MSWA staff - and over 40 expert speakers from healthcare, research, disability, aged care, and other sectors. The event focused on fostering cross-sector collaboration to enhance neurological care and wellbeing in WA and beyond.

MSWA CEO Melanie Kiely, led a panel inviting MS Australia CEO Rohan Greenland, neurological health researcher Professor Jennifer Rodgers, MSWA Speech Pathologist Charlotte Huynh, neurologist Dr Dev Nathani, and Clients Gavin Harper and Ellen-May Eaton to discuss the importance of translational research. This insightful conversation emphasised the need for ongoing research across all areas of neurology and how to translate progress and findings to the community to improve patient outcomes.

The panel agreed that research must lead to real-world outcomes, enhancing diagnosis, treatment, and access for those living with neurological conditions. Professor Rodger highlighted the role of curiosity-driven research in laying the foundation for future innovations. Mr Greenland demonstrated how emerging technologies, such as AI can accelerate the analysis of MRI scans, and help identify biological markers and changes at different stages of MS.

Drawing from lived experience, Mr Harper and Ms Eaton called for more specialised training for GPs and better access to neurologists. Clinician Ms Huynh emphasised the need for staying current with research and enhancing Telehealth services to ensure high-quality care reaches regional and remote areas.



MSWA team members, Carol, James, Pamela and Julia at the Neuro Expo.

The panel concluded that for research to truly benefit patients, evidence-based practices and innovations must be effectively and swiftly translated into the hands of healthcare providers and communities.

The MSWA Team was also at the two-day Neuro Expo that was held in conjunction to the conference. They greeted and met with members of the community to share MSWA's wraparound support spanning across 16 service areas to support West Australians with neurological conditions to live life, not limits.

Julia Tran
MSWA Research Coordinator



Research translation discussion panel led by MSWA CEO Melanie Kiely.



Jo Penkin: One step at a time

Looking back, Jo Penkin recognises she was never one to shy away from a challenge, living a life some only read about. Diagnosed with MS in her early twenties, she was simply too busy to acknowledge her symptoms and instead turned her attention to something experienced by only 1% of the population - marathon running. Jo has incredibly completed 20 marathons across the globe, driven by a simple mindset - when things get tough, one step at a time and one foot in front of the other.

Working as a ship mate, then a skipper and a wind surfing instructor in Greece, in her early twenties, Jo was busy. For many years, her work led her across the UK and Europe, but life as a skipper is not for the faint-hearted. She remembers a time while working on the Ergamont, a ferry off England's south coast, when her MS symptoms first began to bubble to the surface.

"This was like a hangover, although I hadn't drunk anything for days, and it was like somebody was yelling in my ear, but everyone was talking normally."

"I felt myself gently bobbing up and down. Not an unusual sensation on a boat, but the Egremont was secured with heavy chains - you only felt a big boat going by. I turned to see what kind of boat it was but there was nothing there."

Deep down, Jo sensed that something was off, but she brushed away the feeling - it's hard to imagine anything seriously wrong when you're only 20 years old. In fact, only after returning to England several years later did she visit a doctor.

"I came back from Greece and my mum asked, 'what's wrong with your leg?'"

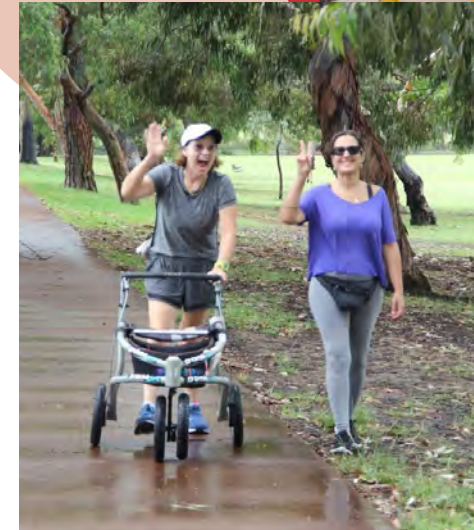
"You can't lie to your mum, can you?" Jo laughs. "So I said, 'I'll just go to the doctor - I'm sure it's nothing to worry about.'"

Jo was diagnosed with MS at 24 years old, but chose to set it aside, determined not to let a diagnosis stand in the way of everything she still wanted to achieve.

It was in 1989 that she met her now husband, Jack. At the time, Jack was an amateur marathon runner. In 1990, she watched him run the London Marathon and wondered from the sidelines if she herself, could one day cross the finish line of a marathon.

Initially, Jo set her sights on jogging just 100 yards. "Once I managed that without falling over," she said, "I threw caution to the wind and declared then I'll run the next London Marathon."

I didn't tell anyone. I didn't want anyone saying I couldn't do it. People have stopped saying that now, they know me too well.



Jo takes part in Parkrun every Sunday morning.



Jo and Jack virtually complete the London Marathon 30 years later!

After weeks of training, she progressed from 100 yards to one mile, then two miles and then began running from suburb to suburb. Soon after, she was recording nine miles.

"It was a challenge, but my life has been a series of challenges," she laughs. "I put my back into it and ensure that my scatter-brained idea is successful."

What began as a personal challenge gradually turned into a passion that spanned decades. Over the years, Jo completed multiple marathons in cities near and far - sometimes dressed in costume, other times with Jack by her side.

Although she started running in her mid-20s, she didn't notice her MS worsening until after she turned 49. Now with two children and a slower-paced life in Perth alongside Jack, Jo could no longer ignore the symptoms she was experiencing. Despite maintaining a positive, go-getter attitude, it became increasingly difficult to stay optimistic.

"I have always been a bubbly person however, this was big, it felt like a catastrophe," Jo states. "I had fallen into a hole that I just couldn't climb out of."

"It was MSWA that helped dig me out and set me back on track. I became mobile again, they took some of the housework off me, fed me, helped me get to medical appointments and shop because, what girl doesn't love shopping! I will always be extremely grateful to MSWA for helping me through those dark days."

With that support, Jo began reclaiming her life - not just existing but enjoying it to the full.

"I got back on the treadmill and started walking, I walked the first 100 yards and then another. Then I thought, 'well, maybe I could walk a marathon instead!'"

That small step sparked something bigger - a return to what she loved, reshaped by a new perspective. If she couldn't run a marathon she'd walk one. The finish line can look different for everyone, all that matters is you take one step at a time and put one foot in front of the other.

Jo then went on to complete several more marathons, including Uluru, and Rottneest - some of which she walked on the treadmill in her garage, following the routes on her phone. Fittingly, her 20th - and final - marathon was the London Marathon, which she completed virtually, exactly 30 years after she first crossed its finish line in person.

"In 2021, the marathon was online but sadly they wouldn't accept my entry because I couldn't complete it within 24 hours!"

"Instead, Jack and I participated in our own version. We were then able to send the team a photo of us with our original medals on. They were delighted and texted us congratulations."

Though Jo hasn't run another marathon since, she is now an important part of the Parkrun community, joining every Sunday morning. Jo's determination has led to a long line of amazing achievements that form the patchwork of her colourful life - filled with family, friends and incredible adventures across the globe. When things get tough, Jo really does prove all you can achieve when you take life back to basics and focus on putting one foot in front of the other.

World MS Day: Celebrating our community

On May 30, the neuro community united to celebrate World MS Day.

The 2025 global theme, *My MS Diagnosis*, provided a powerful opportunity to start conversations, break down barriers, and foster connections among Clients, staff, and the broader WA community. Together, we helped shine a light on the triumphs and challenges faced by people living with not just MS, but any neurological condition - all while reinforcing the need for continued advocacy, research and education to ensure a brighter future for the neuro community.

Here's how we celebrated the occasion:

Art Without Limits

To celebrate this year's World MS Day, we invited Clients, carers, family members, those living with a neuro condition, or know someone who is, to submit a piece of art that reflects their own *Expression of Self*.

Prior to the submission deadline, MSWA Client and mixed media artist Hank Gidney hosted art workshops at both the MSWA Beechboro and Butler Service Centres, encouraging all those who came along to play with different textures, textiles and mediums - creatively exploring how they see themselves.

"We all have the ability to express ourselves, we just need the freedom to do so. There are no wrong or right answers, it is a process of making, that is the direction and the goal. The workshop was all about having fun and experimenting with creativity," Hank explains.

For those who may not have dexterity or simply prefer to express themselves through their appearance, photographer Jon Gellweiler visited MSWA Service Centres at Bunbury, Wilson and Rockingham to capture some amazing self-portraits. Clients sat and posed, some with props, others with their best 'blue-steel', and expressed themselves down the lens.

The completed artwork and portraits were then displayed in the second annual Art Without Limits exhibition, hosted in the lobby at Perth's Central Park Tower and, for the first time, Bunbury's Stirling Street Art Centre.

The artworks and portraits on display depicted a very raw and real insight into what living with a neurological condition can look like, both internally and externally.

An exclusive opening night event was held at both locations - allowing all the artists to view their work, with a wine or canape in hand. In Perth, a jazz band performed as more than 100 guests explored the artwork and engaged in meaningful conversations.

"Our community has amazing stories, talent, hopes and dreams just like everybody else," said MSWA Community Engagement Manager, Emily Ace.

We're trying to showcase the people, not just the condition that they live with, and breaking down that barrier with the general public to show them another side of the amazing people behind those conditions and what they can really do.

On the morning of World MS Day, guests and artists were once again welcomed to the exhibitions to enjoy a relaxed morning tea. This was a more casual opportunity to browse the artwork at their own pace whilst enjoying a coffee and connecting with community members.

Throughout the week, attendees were invited to vote for their favourite artwork to win the People's Choice Award. Irene Beadle received the honour for *I Feel Safe Here* in Perth. Taking the win in Bunbury was Chris McEnroe with his piece *Skateboard Lamp*.

Check out all the images from Art Without Limits here



World MS Day morning tea with our community.



Misha and her MSWA Care Support Worker, Nora.

Hank, who hosted art workshops across Perth in the lead up to World MS Day.



Bunbury exhibition opening night.

Rafael, got a chance to pose with his piece!



Bunbury's People's Choice Award winner, Chris McEnroe's *Skateboard Lamp*.

I love making unique lamps made from recycled vintage items as it brings out my creative side whilst still letting me practice my electrical skills. I was diagnosed with Guillain-Barré syndrome in 2016, which caused partial quadriplegia and made me a permanent wheelchair user.

Perth's People's Choice Award winner, Irene Beadle with her piece *I Feel Safe Here*.

I was experimenting with art when I met Claire. We became friends and painted together, mostly acrylic fluid painting which didn't require a steady hand. Later on, when Claire focused on painting by numbers, her tremors stopped and she even began making her own original versions. Coping with MS meant Claire had good days and difficult days, so she put painting aside until recently when she had a session with Hank at MSWA Butler. The painting depicts a young deer happily drinking in a forest, where she feels safe.

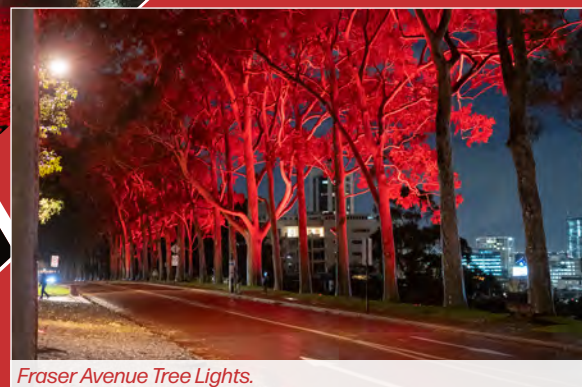




Matagarup Bridge.



Optus Stadium.



Fraser Avenue Tree Lights.

Paint the town red!

In addition to shining the spotlight on our talented community of artists, Perth lit up red in honour of World MS Day! Iconic landmarks across Perth turned on their best MSWA red for the evening, all to raise awareness and stand in solidarity to those who are impacted by neurological conditions.

Some locations included Fraser Avenue Tree Lights (Kings Park), Council House, Trafalgar Bridge, Optus Stadium, Matagarup Bridge, Mount Street Bridge, Northbridge Tunnel and Joondalup Drive Bridge.

The WA community was encouraged to take photos and spread awareness of the day with the hashtag #WorldMSDay.

Nursing meet and greet

Our MSWA Nursing team hosted World MS Day stalls in various Perth hospitals, using this important occasion to raise awareness about MS and highlight the wraparound services MSWA provides to support the neuro community!



MSWA Neurological Liaison Nurses, Aline and Jess host a stall at Joondalup Hospital.



Thank you to all the incredible artists, attendees and supporters who helped bring our World MS Day celebrations to life. By sharing your stories, breaking down barriers, and raising awareness for West Australians living with MS, you embodied the spirit of this year's theme, My MS Diagnosis - highlighting the power of connection, understanding and support.

Photographer Jon Gellweiler captured powerful portraits of our Clients, which were all featured in the exhibition. View the online gallery here



Winter thoughts

Winter can be negatively perceived as a time of shutting down, or more positively as a time of rest, consolidation and growth.

In Western seasons, winter months are from June to August. In Indigenous culture this is covered by the seasons of Makuru (June - July) and Djilba (August - September). These seasons usher in the coldest and wettest period of the year, marked by the first rains, frequent gales, and powerful storms. As they progress, they transition into a mix of crisp, clear days and milder stretches of rain and wind. Traditionally, they are also seen as seasons of fertility, conception, and growth.

People, like seasons, have their own cycles of activity and rest, and this reminds us of the importance of finding balance in what we do. Take too much rest, little gets done. While too much work is not sustainable.

In Japanese culture there is a particular value in appreciating nature and the change in seasons. It encourages acceptance of transience and imperfection. This is called Wabi-Sabi and is defined as the 'beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete', that considers the natural state of things in the world.

Wabi-Sabi acknowledges three simple realities;

Nothing lasts, nothing is finished, and nothing is perfect.

It also values qualities of nature such as simplicity, tranquillity, and grace. These qualities also suggest virtues of human character and behaviour.

There are five teachings that support this:

1. Through acceptance, you find freedom; out of acceptance, you find growth.
2. All things in life, including you, are in an imperfect state of flux, so strive not for perfection, but for excellence instead.
3. Appreciate the beauty of all things, especially the great beauty that hides beneath the surface and of what can seem to be broken.
4. Slow and simple is the best way to feel the joy of what it means to be alive.
5. To be content exactly where you are with all that you already have, is to be happy.

So, perhaps these winter months can bring us change and beauty. They may encourage us to rest and consider life. Perhaps inviting us to see none of us is perfect but we each have value and something to offer.

To see we are all part of life's greater cycles, and to find some peace and acceptance of this. To embrace the pleasure within change. To use a quieter season to connect with family and those we love and value. To be more accepting and gentler towards both ourselves and others. To recuperate and re-vitalise in preparation for spring!

Ian Sampson
MSWA Counsellor

Your emotions are messengers

Our emotions are like messengers trying to communicate different things to us.

Some gently knock, whilst others bang loudly on our doors, if only we would listen. Our disconnection from our inner emotional world is not a personal failing; it often stems from not having been taught about emotions or from growing up in environments where there was little space for emotional expression. This can cause us to push them aside, dismiss or be reactive, rather than responsive. We may have been raised with messages that framed certain emotions such as anger or sadness - as unacceptable, while emotions like happiness or excitement were viewed as more acceptable or 'safe' to express.

Emotions don't just appear out of nowhere, they're shaped by how our brain processes what's going on around us and what we've experienced in the past.

Our Understanding Your Emotions module will look at some of the misconceptions about emotions that influence how we deal with them. We will look at the most recent science on emotions and use this knowledge to help you understand what you're experiencing and give you the language to label your feelings. This module is based on the work of neuroscientist Dr. Lisa Feldman Barret and her research into how our brains create emotions, and how this knowledge can help us to get in the driver's seat with our emotions.

We will also look at the hidden cost of not making space for our emotions and operating from the space of autopilot. From the research of psychotherapists such as Dr. Gabor Mate, we will also touch on the downsides of pleasing others, suppressing emotions and how they can contribute to greater unwellness.

Lastly, we will explore how words can be used to identify your emotions to try and expand your emotional vocabulary so that you are able to name what you are feeling with greater clarity

If you are interested in attending our Understanding Your Emotions module, please register with sidrah.khan@mswa.org.au For more information and to explore other Wellbeing modules and workshops, please visit mswa.org.au/get-involved/events

Sidrah Khan
MSWA Counsellor

Power up your winter soup

While vegetable soups are packed with fibre, they often fall short on protein. Protein is essential for muscle growth and repair, maintaining skin, hair and nail health, hormone production and immune support.

Without enough protein, these vital functions can be affected. Not only that, but it can also help keep you feeling full and satisfied for longer.

As the cooler months approach, here are some simple ideas to boost up the protein content in your delicious vegetable soup!



Hearty vegetable soup

SERVES: 4 | PREP: 15 MINUTES | COOK: 40 MINUTES

Ingredients

- Spray oil
- 1 red onion, finely diced
- 2 celery sticks, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 medium sweet potato cut into cubes
- 1 medium carrot, roughly chopped
- 4 medium tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 3 cups spinach leaves
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 500ml reduced salt vegetable stock
- 500ml water
- 1 tbsp parsley, roughly chopped
- 600g canned brown lentils, drained and rinsed
- Salt and pepper to taste

To boost the protein in your soup, select one of the additions below:

- Serve with 1 slice of a high protein bread (i.e. Herman Brot Complete Protein Bread, Macro High Protein Lower Carb or Burgen Soy-Lin Bread)
- Add 1 cup of a high protein pasta (i.e. Vetta Smart Protein Pasta or San Remo Pulse Pasta) and extra 250ml of water
- Add 1 tin of beans, drained and rinsed (i.e. four bean mix or kidney beans)

Method

1. Cook onion, celery and garlic for 1-2 minutes using a light spray of olive oil in a large pot over medium heat.
2. Add spices to the pot and cook for a further minute until fragrant.
3. Add the vegetables (except the spinach), lentils, vegetable stock and water. If using a tin of beans, add to the pot.
4. If using protein pasta, add to the pot with extra 250ml of water.
5. Bring to the boil. Reduce heat to simmer and cook partially covered for 20 – 25 minutes until sweet potato has softened and soup has thickened.
6. Stir through spinach. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
7. Serve soup, top with chopped parsley.
8. Add carrot, celery and garlic and cook for about 6 minutes, or until vegetables start to soften slightly.

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.

Jodie Roberts
MSWA Dietitian

Huntington's Awareness Month:

Occupational therapy support

In the month of May, communities globally come together to raise awareness for Huntington's disease. It's an important opportunity to create awareness, educate the community and advocate for better support and services. There is currently no known cure for this neurodegenerative disease.

At MSWA, we understand how profoundly Huntington's can affect not only the individual but their families too. While there is no cure for the condition, evidence-based interventions can make daily life safer, more manageable and more meaningful. Occupational therapy is one of those vital supports.

- **Promoting independence in daily living**
One of the core goals of occupational therapy for Huntington's is to help individuals maintain independence in their daily routines for as long as possible. This includes conducting comprehensive Functional Capacity Assessments (FCA), providing technologies and ways to conduct daily tasks like getting showered, meal preparation and more.
- **Supporting cognition and emotional wellbeing**
As Huntington's progresses, cognitive changes, including difficulties with planning, memory, concentration and emotional regulation, can become more noticeable. MSWA Occupational Therapists (OTs) introduce practical tools to support cognitive health, including structured routines to reduce confusion, visual cues or memory aids, time management tools, and mindfulness and stress management techniques.



- **Enhancing motor skills and mobility**
Many people with Huntington's experience muscle weakness, coordination issues, and involuntary movements. MSWA OTs help by tailoring movement-based interventions to maximise function and safety.
- **Home and living services**
As symptoms progress, the home often needs adjustments to support safety and independence. OTs conduct thorough Home Visits and Accommodation Assessments to recommend modifications. These adjustments can help reduce carer stress, promote autonomy and delay the need for residential care.
- **Planning for the future**
Because Huntington's is progressive, our OTs work to support Clients and their families with proactive planning by helping to identify future goals and potential challenges. We believe empowering families with a forward-thinking approach reduces uncertainty and ensures your future care aligns with your values and preferences.

If you or a loved one is navigating life with Huntington's, remember that you're not alone. There is a strong community and support system available. It's important that we continue to advocate for this condition beyond the month of May, to spark conversations and shed light on a rare disease that deserves greater understanding and support.

Reviewed by

Sarah Coutinho
MSWA Occupational Therapist

Celebrating International Nurses Day

International Nurses Day is celebrated globally on May 12, marking the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. The theme for 2025 was the health and wellbeing of nurses - highlighting the critical role a healthy nursing workforce plays in improving health systems, better outcomes for communities and strengthening economies.

Our dedicated team, including both Neurological Nurses and Residential Nurses, are more than just caregivers - they are a lifeline for our Clients. From the moment of diagnosis, they are often the first reassuring voice, guiding each person with compassion, expertise and personalised care. Their unwavering commitment ensures our Clients feel supported throughout their journey - often with a warm cuppa, a reassuring smile, and most likely, a joke or two.

To mark the occasion, the team hosted morning teas across several Residential Facilities. They also provided health checks for MSWA staff at Wilson, Butler, Bunbury, and Albany.

Over a lovely morning tea, team members took the time to connect, reflect, and celebrate the vital contributions nurses make to our community and the healthcare system.

On International Nurses Day, and every day, we thank our Nurses and our aspiring future Nurses, for the vital role they play in transforming lives.

Hear from the MSWA Nursing team

"You're not just a nurse. Take pride in what you do. You're making a difference in someone else's life."

Laura Dalton, MSWA Nurse

"Treat a disease, you win or lose. Treat a person, you win every time."

Kelly Duthie, MSWA Nurse

"A nurse's care extends beyond the physical - it reaches into the soul, where true healing begins."

Aimee Fallows, MSWA Nurse

"To be an MSWA NeuroCare Nurse is to listen to what the brain cannot say, to advocate when words are lost, and to find humanity in the silence between synapses. It's caring not just for what's seen on a scan, but for the whole person within."

Lauren Boots, MSWA Residential Service Delivery Manager

"As nurses, we aren't just healthcare providers - we become part of our Clients' lives, their families, their communities. We bear witness to their triumphs and struggles, and we are there for them when they feel lost or uncertain. This is a privilege we hold dear."

Dee Lucey, MSWA Metro Clinical Nurse Manager

"Working at MSWA gives me the opportunity to deliver care that is truly person-centred. It's not just about treating symptoms - it's about understanding each person's journey, their goals, their fears, and their strengths."

Rochelle Brown, MSWA Neurological Nurse

"I love working as an MSWA Nurse because I get to support my Clients throughout their journey. I love that I can make a real difference to their lives and help them to live their best life."

Emily Koop, MSWA Neurological Nurse

Coming soon: 24/7 nursing support

Introducing MSWA's new NeuroCare Nurse Program!

We're thrilled to share some exciting news - MSWA is working hard to expand our nursing support through a brand-new initiative called the NeuroCare Nurse (NCN) Program.

This new service will provide around-the-clock access to specialist nursing care for our Clients. It's a major step forward in ensuring continuity of care and reducing hospital admissions - ensuring peace of mind, day or night.

To make this vision a reality, our Philanthropy, Partnerships and Events Team has been rallying support from the community. So far, we've raised \$240,000 thanks to an inspiring event held at the State Buildings in Perth. The evening brought together new and long-standing supporters - including the McCusker Charitable Foundation, Pharmacy 777, Michela and Adrian Fini, and the Stan Perron Charitable Foundation.

We're aiming to raise a total of \$500,000, which will allow us to welcome three new nurses to our team and launch 24/7 support across WA.

Our 2025 tax appeal is also helping raise funds, by sharing the story of Nick, an MSWA Client living with cerebral palsy.

Nick's journey hasn't been easy. Living with cerebral palsy, his daily care needs can be complex and overwhelming - from managing medications and appointments to the worry that something might go wrong when no one's around.

But everything changed when Nick was introduced to MSWA.

Nick was introduced to Aline, one of the nurses here at MSWA, and says having her by his side has been "life changing." She checks in regularly, helps him stay on top of his health, and is there when he needs support.

"I'm not alone anymore," Nick says. "Aline is always just a phone call away."

You'll hear more about the NCN Program in the coming months, and we're so excited to keep you updated as it grows.

If you have any questions about the program or would like to know more, please reach out to nursing.metro@mswa.org.au

Leah Voller
MSWA Senior Individual Giving Officer



Nick Chapman regularly checks in with his NeuroCare Nurse, Aline.

National Volunteer Week: Connecting Communities

Did you know in 2024, 1.5 million individuals dedicated their time to volunteering in Western Australia? Their collective efforts generated a substantial value of \$63.9B for the state.¹

It's no surprise how important volunteers are to the WA community, both socially and economically, with their impact reaching every corner of the state.

At MSWA, we deeply value the commitment of our volunteers. Their contributions have a profound and lasting effect on our Clients, staff and the broader neuro community we serve.

Each May, National Volunteering Week takes place providing a meaningful opportunity to recognise and celebrate the incredible volunteering community. This year's theme of 'Connecting Communities' perfectly encapsulates the spirit of volunteering in bringing people together, fostering belonging and strengthening social bonds.

¹ Reference: Volunteering WA, 2024.



To honour this special week, MSWA hosted morning teas and awards ceremony across our various MSWA Services Centres including, Wilson, Beechboro, Bunbury, Butler and Albany to celebrate and honour the incredible contributions of our volunteers.

Volunteers were celebrated with personalised certificates of appreciation and thoughtfully curated gift hampers, acknowledging their selfless service and ongoing dedication.

MSWA Clients and staff also joined in on the festivities, to celebrate and thank volunteers for the vital role they play in our neuro community.

Our volunteers come from all walks of life, each with their own reason for giving back. Some offer their time to help others, for enjoyment, for social and community connection or to simply use their skills and experience.

Regardless of their motivations, their desire to support others and enrich the lives of those in the community is truly commendable.

To each of our volunteers, whether you've joined for a day or have been with us for years - thank you! Your contributions make a real difference to the thousands of West Aussies living with a neurological condition.

We also extend our sincere thanks to VolunteeringWA and Lotterywest for their invaluable support in making this appreciation event possible.

If you're interested in volunteering or know someone who is, contact us on volunteering@mswa.org.au for more information.



Community Fundraisers

Running beyond limits

This August, a group of mates from a local running club are taking on their biggest challenge yet - running over 400 kilometres from Osborne Park to Bluff Knoll in just five days to raise money and awareness for MS.

The event called **Beyond Limits: 400km for MS**, is not just about distance; it's deeply personal. Runner Ryan Fazzalari and his team will each run the entire distance - no relays, no breaks. Their goal is to raise \$10,000 for MSWA.

For Ryan, the challenge hits close to home. His mum, Joanna, was diagnosed with MS at the age of 34. Now 55, she continues to face the disease with strength and courage.



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



Scan to support their journey

The team knows that while they have the privilege of moving freely and pushing their limits, many people with MS face far greater daily battles. Every step - every blister, cramp, and moment of doubt - is dedicated to those living with MS.

The challenge doesn't end when they reach Bluff Knoll - the runners will take on one final push by climbing the peak itself.

"We're just everyday people pushing beyond our limits for a cause that matters," Ryan said.

"If five days of pain can help people living with MS, then it's all worth it."

Trek for a cause!

Local Denmark resident, Daniel Mastalerz, is preparing to walk for a cause close to his heart.

Daniel left school at 19 and joined the Royal Australian Army - living for ten years as a soldier who felt 10 foot tall and bulletproof. "The idea of anything stopping me never entered my mind, but life has a way of showing us how fragile we are," Daniel reflects. After leaving the Army, Daniel was diagnosed with secondary progressive multiple sclerosis. At the time, he was told that he should already be in a wheelchair. At just 39, the news hit him hard.



Donate to Daniel's cause



But here he is, five years on, still walking and pushing forward!

Supported by his family and NDIS support worker Cairo, Daniel is preparing to walk 3.2km from Denmark's town center to the river mouth. "This is not just a walk for me; it is a statement that no matter what life throws my way, I will keep fighting," says Daniel.

He dedicates his walk to others living with MS, and those who may not yet know the struggles they will face. "The road to finding a cure is long and challenging, but scientists and researchers are the way forward. That's why I'm choosing to raise vital funds," Daniel shares. "Every step I take is a step towards hope, better treatment, and ultimately a step towards a cure."

Daniel's walk will take place on Saturday, 4 October, and he invites anyone who wishes, to join him.

Trish Watson
MSWA Community Fundraising Events Officer

2025 MSWA Albany Swim: *Community spirit shines*

The Great Southern community made a splash at the 13th annual MSWA Albany Swim, held on 3 May at the Albany Leisure and Aquatic Centre. This year's event saw over 100 swimmers from nine teams come together to support MSWA's ongoing efforts.

The well-loved community event raised more than \$40,000, contributing to the ongoing success of the event, which has raised over \$300,000 over the past 13 years. The spirit of generosity and community involvement was evident as swimmers donned colourful costumes and participated in the eight-hour marathon relay swim.

Team Marines proudly took the title of Highest Team Fundraisers, collecting an impressive \$11,517. Hot on their heels was Great Southern Grammar, which raised a commendable \$8,015. Individual fundraising efforts were also celebrated, with Rechelle Wright named the Highest Individual Fundraiser, raising an impressive \$3,640!

Collectively, the teams swum a total of 9,900 laps during the event – an incredible effort! A special mention to Great Southern Grammar, who claimed the title for the most laps swum, with an exhausting 1,489 laps swum.

The MSWA Albany Swim has become a cherished tradition in the Great Southern region, bringing together locals, MSWA Clients, and supporters to raise awareness and funds for those living with neurological conditions. Proceeds from the event continue to support MSWA Albany Service Centre, which provides tailored services, including, massage, and physiotherapy. As well, the event also supports our High-Support Accommodation in Albany, providing 24/7 care to Clients in a homely environment.

The event continues to attract participants who return year after year, as well as enthusiastic first timers, showcasing the community's ongoing support for MSWA.

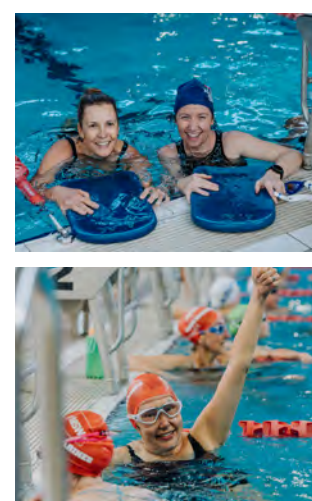
Congratulations to all swimmers, fundraisers, and volunteers for making the 2025 MSWA Albany Swim, making it a resounding success!

A special mention to the City of Albany for its continued support, along with CBD Architects, Moss Conveyancing, Bathroom Décor and Tiles, and Wiz Loans, among the many local businesses who have also supported the event.

We look forward to seeing even more swimmers take part in next year's event, as we continue to raise funds and awareness for MSWA's cause!

Trish Watson

MSWA Community Fundraising Events Officer



2025 MSWA Ocean Ride: *Pedal for a purpose*

The 15th MSWA Ocean Ride took place on Sunday, 6 April at Burswood Park. This year, the event was held at a brand-new location and saw over 900 participants and 64 teams pedalling for a purpose!

The energy on the day was electric and we're proud to share that the event fundraised over **\$300,000**. These vital funds help support Western Australians living with neurological conditions, providing much-needed services and care. We would also love to thank our incredible Match Giving Supporter, Retravisation – whose generous contribution was invaluable to fundraising for our cause.

A heartfelt congratulations goes to Team ROAR, led by long-time participant and Team Captain, Garry Giles. Garry was also named Highest Individual Fundraiser, raising an impressive \$14,660. Team ROAR topped the leaderboard as Highest Fundraising Team, with a total of \$23,370!

The beloved cycling event took place at Burswood Park, offering fresh new routes and an exciting Event Village for families and the community to enjoy. The routes started and finished at the Event Village, allowing participants to be part of the fun and excitement; as well as enjoying the safety and convenience of some of Town of Victoria Park's cycle paths.

MSWA CEO, Melanie Kiely expressed her appreciation for past participants and the feedback they shared, which have led to these exciting changes for the 2025 event.



Cr. West Beach Studio.

I want to thank our past Ocean Ride participants and champions in sharing their feedback with us, helping us grow and develop to make this iconic fundraiser even better.

"Collectively, over the last 15 years of the event, we've fundraised well over \$3M and we couldn't have done this without each of the 17,000+ past participants."

"Listening to their thoughts and insights ensures we put on a memorable, fun and safe day for our fundraisers of all ages and riding abilities."

"I am always so proud to see how West Aussies come together and support our great cause. It is only with the help of our supporters and volunteers that we are able to support so many people across WA."

To every rider, volunteer, donor and supporter – thank you. Your involvement made this day unforgettable, and your dedication is making a real difference in the lives of many.

Samantha Judkins

MSWA Senior Fundraising Events Officer



Scan to view
event photos

Meet the team: *Simon Jennings*

Simon has stepped into the Chief of Client Service Delivery at role MSWA having extensive experience in healthcare with the National Health Service and Silverchain.

Life's a bit of a whirlwind with four kids - two teenage girls (13 and 16) keeping me on my toes, plus a younger boy (7) and another girl (4) adding to the chaos.

I was born in Hereford, England, but after 13 years in WA, I'm a fully committed, flag-waving Aussie - right down to passionately backing Australia in the Ashes (and thoroughly enjoying winding up my UK based family).

I'm a massive cricket and footy fan and, as an overseas blow-in, I've pledged my loyalty to the Dockers. These days, I don't play organised sport myself, but I do keep busy coaching soccer and Auskick, so I'm still very much 'in the game'. I have a bit of reputation in the office for bad dad jokes, so there you go, I am kicking goals again!

I also have a personal connection to Parkinson's disease, which isn't lived experience, but it has given me a tiny glimpse into the daily challenges of navigating the often frustrating and confusing system we have in Australia.

These frustrations make me double down on the journey. Almost 20 years ago, I got the chance to work in a purpose-based organisation.

Having spent the first part of my career working in a variety of industries, I found myself 12 months into a contract with the National Health Service Institute for Innovation and Improvement in the UK, realising that I could apply all that I had learnt to date, but it could be used to benefit others.

At the time we were busy redesigning the broader National Health Service to remodel aspects of how they delivered care, something that stands me in good stead for the coming years at MSWA as we face changes to the NDIS and the need to innovate and optimise what we do.

Having caught the bug for working with purpose, once I got to WA, I looked for my happy space and found an opportunity to work on the opening of Fiona Stanley Hospital, which was quickly followed by the opening of Midland Hospital, Perth Children's Hospital and Berwick Hospital (in Victoria).

At the risk of becoming 'that guy that opens hospitals,' I jumped over to working with Silverchain, another WA organisation with a rich history like MSWA, where I learnt lots about the challenges of getting things done in the community where the funding and environment is very different to hospitals! Wind forward to July 2023, the opportunity to join MSWA eventuated.

Simon at Laneway Festival with his daughter.

I'm also a Sessional Academic in the School of Public Health and a member of the Industry Course Advisory Board for the Health Sciences at Curtin University. As well as a Sessional Academic at Deakin University, teaching the Health Economics degree.

I find that connecting industry to higher education and vice versa brings the academic rigour to the workplace and the industry reality to the classroom - it challenges me to stay on the top of things and allows me to speak to the next generation about the big challenges we see day to day.

Couple all of this with my role at MSWA, you can see I like to keep busy.

Much to my delight, I find myself now nearly two years into my journey with MSWA, more excited than ever to be in my happy place, working with an organisation that have passion and purpose. It's something I have the privilege of seeing everyday across our Clients and employees.

There is nowhere I would rather be.

Everything Outreach

Bunnings big gift to Butler

Bunnings Mindarie visited Butler Outreach to give the garden a DIY makeover - adding some much needed colour and greenery to the space.

Working together with the Outreach Clients, Bunnings set up new planters and brought a trolley of goodies, including Bunnings hats, a hose and even a brand-new BBQ for the area! As a thank you for their efforts, Butler Outreach then hosted a traditional Aussie BBQ, inviting the Bunnings staff to come back and celebrate the revamped area and their kind contributions. Thanks to Mondo's Butcher's additional generosity - Clients and staff were all able to enjoy a sausage in a bun in true Bunnings style.

We thank Bunnings Mindarie for their contributions to our Butler Services Centre and Mondo's for their generous donations. We look forward to more exciting projects in the future.



Beechboro Outreach's valley visit

In May, Beechboro Outreach Clients and the MSWA team enjoyed a fun-filled day in the sunshine at Whiteman Park. The team served a fantastic morning tea, followed by a BBQ spread as everyone mingled, played games, and enjoyed each other's company.

Highlights of the day included some friendly competitions in bowling, giant Jenga, and the mandatory game of Rummikub. Everyone had an opportunity to chat, socialise and enjoy a beautiful day out underneath the gum trees!



Wilson's gone marbles!

Wilson Outreach burst with colour, laughter, and creativity as Clients and staff completed a beautiful marbling project that had been weeks in the making. This simple, delightfully messy, and endlessly fun art technique brought joy to everyone involved.



And the Oscar for Best Dressed goes to...

The red carpet was rolled out and both MSWA Clients and staff were dressed to the nines for our Oscar celebrations across our Outreach Centres. Everyone had an amazing time with an Oscar-themed quiz, an awards ceremony, and a star-studded photobooth!



Accomodation Adventures

Easter celebrations at Hamilton Hill

The team at Hamilton Hill added a creative twist to their Easter celebrations with a staff colouring-in competition - and some hidden artistic talents were discovered! There were quite a few contenders, and our residents had the job of voting for their favourites.

On Easter Sunday, the team continued the good vibes going with a seafood BBQ lunch, followed by some classic bingo fun!



Luciano's Easter celebrations!



Lyndee and Won adding the finishing touches.

Lyndee's Blue Tree Project

Fern River resident Lyndee requested to paint a tree that had not survived the summer in blue, as a gesture to raise awareness for mental health. Lyndee painted as much of the tree as she could reach and then chose to use her community participation time to guide her MSWA Support Worker, Won, in completing the rest.

In the coming weeks, the team and Lyndee will be finishing the upper branches and adding important information about the Blue Tree Project.

Raise the roof!

It's impressive to watch 60 workers bring a building to life with speed and coordination - lifting steel, laying bricks, and sending sparks flying. While Perth and Shenton Park are still waking up, the Montario Quarter construction site is already alive, pushing concrete into shape and forming what will soon be a rooftop gym and alfresco dining area for 20 residents and their visitors.

The sunrise feels a lot like the site itself - slow and quiet at first, with a few yawns, coffee runs, and stiff backs. Then suddenly, everything switches on: tools roar, cranes swing into motion, and the day begins.

For the first time, access was given to the top slab at Montario Quarter. With the sun well above the horizon, the peaceful chirping of birds clashed comically with loud tools and crackling two-way radio calls with Brett, the crane driver 30 metres up. The building now buzzes with purpose.

The rooftop will offer great views from the activity space, east-facing balcony, gym, and salon. Architect, Alec Whyte said, "I love this time of year - cool, calm mornings with sunshine." Before designing, he pictured someone enjoying a quiet coffee, watching the city wake up.

We thank the Department of Health for their support making the dream a reality. This project is more than construction - it's about creating belonging.

Steve Corbett

MSWA Director of Property Development and Construction

Get to know: Jason Brotherson



(L-R) Jason Brotherson, CEO Melanie Kiely & CXO Tony Millar.

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

Jason serves as the Chair of People and Governance on the MSWA Board. He is also the CEO of the Pharmacy 777 Group of companies, where he leads a growing network of over 100 stores across Australia, supporting independent community pharmacies.

Throughout his career, Jason has held senior roles across multiple sectors, including engineering, government, police, major carrier industry bodies, and allied health industries.

What motivated you to join the MSWA board?

My motivation was inspired by my father, Dr Greg Brotherson, a legendary figure in MSWA's history dating back to the late 1970s. Before his passing, I decided that I wanted to carry on the legacy and reached out to Marcus (previous MSWA CEO) to understand the application process and here I am today.

I have big shoes to fill as the Brotherson name is known to many; hopefully, I live up to the name and expectations.

Secondly, watching the MSWA Care Support Workers care for dad and ensure he was as comfortable as possible was a driving force for me to align with the organisation.

How does your career background, set you up for your role as a Board Member?

My career is very diversified. I am an engineer by qualification but never really enjoyed it. Early on, I learned quickly to ask hard questions and seek out good answers. A fun fact and happy to admit this - I have never been qualified for the roles I've undertaken. I have continually evolved my education, with a motto of 'what does success look like?'. This adjusted my thinking to be best for business decisions with a sound resolve for growth.

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

A standout memory was when I first joined and met the other Board Members. It was incredibly rewarding to meet many dedicated individuals and hear of their experience and genuine passion for MSWA.

As well, it was a significant achievement to serve as the Chair of the Nominations Committee to recruit new talent for the Board and being part of the hiring process for our current CEO, Melanie.

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

I am a big family man. I enjoy time with my son and those close to me. Offer me a coffee and I'm there!

I have a passion for cars - building and racing them. My racing career of 25 years is an outlet and today more a bonding time with my 13-year-old biggest fan (and critic).

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

We continue funding research and the MSWA brand remains a strong cornerstone - recognised in the communities. Additionally, the MSWA culture continues going from strength to strength and makes a difference to those in need.

Is there anything you would like to add?

I'm proud of my niece for completing the Rottnest Channel Swim, and of my family and businesses for their continued commitment to giving back - through generous donations effort, monies, and time back into MSWA.

Our family is a big supporter of MSWA and that legacy of grandad continuing.



News in brief

Lynda Whitton celebrated

Bunbury local and MSWA Client, Lynda Whitton featured on Channel 7 News for her remarkable contributions to the MS community over three decades! Lynda was the deserving recipient of MS Australia's 2024 John Studdy Award. The 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 Whitton receives the John Studdy Award.

Sector collaboration for better outcomes

MSWA recognises the importance of sector collaboration in shaping a stronger future for the WA neuro community. As part of this commitment, MSWA CEO, Melanie Kiely, attended the Community Neurological Sector Strategy Workshop, hosted by the Neurological Council of WA. This important event brought together a range of organisations from across the neurological sector to explore opportunities for collaboration, share insights and work towards a united strategic vision.



The Neuro Council.

Leave a lasting legacy

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

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

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



Scan to leave a gift in your Will

Save the date

Global MND Awareness Day

Saturday, 21 June 2025

Each year on 21 June, the community comes together to raise awareness for the rare neurodegenerative condition, motor neuron disease (MND). It is a day to honour everyone affected by the condition and also used to express hope that there will be a turning point in the search for a cause, treatment and cure of the disease. The blue cornflower is the symbol of hope for MND around the globe due to its fragile appearance yet hardy nature.



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.

National Stroke Week

4 - 10 August 2025

Every 11 minutes, stroke changes a life. National Stroke Week encourages the community to know the F.A.S.T. (Face, Arms, Speech and Time) signs of stroke so that they can save a life in the event of a loved one experiencing a stroke.



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





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

*Optus Stadium lit up red in
celebration of World MS Day.*



Life not limits