

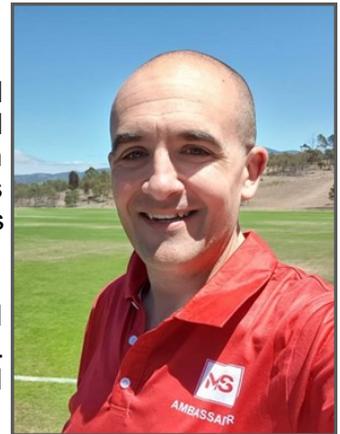


**MS Ambassador
Mark Jablonski**

“Winning the war by losing yourself”

In 2012, I bought myself a bicycle to regain some fitness. Nearing 40 and weighing 145kg, I had always played the ‘cheerful fat guy’ but struggled with my weight. After riding to work for a few days, I experienced such severe numbness in my legs that I had trouble walking. After a long series of tests, scans, pokes and prods, I was diagnosed with transverse myelitis in 2013, and finally remitting relapsing multiple sclerosis in August 2014.

I remember that day vividly - I messaged my wife and then got in my car. I was just leaving the specialist when I felt an overwhelming, impotent rage. I’d never felt so weak or helpless in all my life. Dark visions of being laid out and useless filled my mind.



Fortunately, my strength has always been the great people I surround myself with, and the responsibility I feel to them. First among those are my wife and daughter. I realised I could not be that ‘cheerful fat guy’ any more - to be that size and unable to care for myself would put a burden on my family that I wasn’t prepared to accept.

I had bariatric surgery in April 2014 and not long after my wife did the same. Over the next 12 months, supporting change in each other, we shed more than 140kg between us. I lost nearly half my bodyweight.

‘Losing myself’ meant simple but profound changes - most of which I could never have imagined. Being able to just walk into any store and buy any shirt that takes my eye unbelievable! A tragically bad but enthusiastic cricketer, I started playing at the age of 40 and am now Vice President at my Club.

But most important to me is the change to how I can ‘be there for’ my family. Overall, MS has *improved* my health, by giving me the impetus to actively manage my eating, do more exercise and be more engaged socially.

I am a powerful, honest, energetic and engaging speaker with a family history in promotions and presentation. My story is as humble as it is profound, and as important as it is ordinary. I hope to leave you with an inspirational take on the importance you play not just in your own, but other people’s lives. I am looking forward to sharing my MS journey with others as an MS Ambassador.

**If you would like to book an MS Ambassador
Follow this link to our on-line booking form**
<http://www.ms.org.au/book-ambassador>

“Stay positive because today could be the best day of your life”



“I am living my second life” says Ken, with the determination of a new born, ready to face any challenges with optimism and determination. Staying positive is the focus of Ken’s life as he faces his daily challenges. (check his Facebook page MS positives) <https://www.facebook.com/mspositives/>

Being global, via the computer, Ken continues his involvement with the MS community. This is his life quest and life legacy: to continue to make people aware of what is multiple sclerosis, how it affects you and how you benefit from all the advancements that have happened in the last few years, maintaining a very positive attitude.

Ken’s first life, whilst he was still undiagnosed, involved being very active in his local community, including being President of the JAYCEES and PROBUS Clubs. Ken was only diagnosed in 2005. However, his symptoms had baffled the medical community for years (since his early 20’s, he thinks) and he was diagnosed with a variety of different medical conditions, including stroke. Fortunately, in 2005, he was referred to a neurologist and after many tests and MRI finally confirmed what was really confronting him.

He cares deeply for his fellow human beings, especially those affected by multiple sclerosis, and he wants to be there with them in their journey, helping them, even after his own lifetime.

Ken and Marilyn’s legacy has been formalised via a gift in their Will to Multiple Sclerosis Limited. As members of the “Callistemon League”, they are part of a most loving group of Benefactors who want to continue to support our mission and vision well into the future. They do not want people facing multiple sclerosis alone, they will be there with them, every step of the way, while the search for a cure continues.

Whatever the amount, we’re extremely grateful for any gift left to Multiple Sclerosis Limited. It will provide vital support so people living with multiple sclerosis can live the best life possible. For further information please call Laura or Michael on 1800 443 867 or write to futureplanning@ms.org.au



COUPLES RETREAT



Multiple sclerosis can have a significant impact on the lives of family members and friends of a person living with the disease.

Relationships are hard work at the best of times, so bringing a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis into the mix adds further challenge. The Tasmanian Couples Retreat was run over the weekend of February 22 and 23 with an aim to Relate, Recharge, Restore & Relax Together!

With Presentations from Michael Foster from Care2Serve, formerly Carers Tasmania and Relationship Counsellors, Darren and Jeanette Radley, from the EPI Centre as well as relaxing massages and good food, the weekend was a real hit with 10 couples attending.

We looked at Effective Couple Communication, Love Languages, Living in a Fulfilling Relationship where chronic illness is a factor and Sex & MS. Feedback included comments such as, “Made me think differently. I want to implement strategies” and, I gained a “Better understanding of effective communications skills”

Overall the feedback has been really positive with some great suggestions for improvements for the next retreat. Giving time and attention to our relationships is extremely valuable and MS is pleased to be able to offer this support.



MS EDUCATION



Eat Well Live Well

Monday 6 April - 11:00 am to 12:00 pm

Nicola Graham, Nutritionist, developed the Eat Well, Live Well section of the MS website. Nicola will discuss great foods to eat, superfoods, supplements, MS specific diets and food that can help with fatigue, constipation and mood.

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5211053301614075147>

Get Active with Multiple Sclerosis

Wednesday 22 April - 10:00 to 11:00 am

Presented by Caitlin Ireland, this webinar will take us through the benefits of exercise for people with MS, the types of exercises, the barriers to exercise and how to overcome them.

Join us for this informative session.

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1986707965370578187>

Sleep Well with Multiple Sclerosis

Friday 24 April - 11:00 am to 12:00 pm

This webinar is presented by MS Education and Wellbeing Program Coordinator, Andrea Salmon. Sleep is incredibly important to quality of life and many people living with multiple sclerosis do not sleep well for a variety of reasons.

This webinar will explore sleep issues, its relationship to fatigue and best of all look at strategies to assist you get a better night's sleep.

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/458381305203839755>

For more information please email education@ms.org.au or call [MS Connect](tel:1800042138) (Freecall 1800 042 138)



Wednesday 27 May 2020

**Menzies Institute for Medical Research
MS Research Flagship – Showcase Event
Venue TBC**

Some useful information from MS Social Work Advisors

Our MS Social Work Advisors wanted to let you know about some recent Centrelink changes.

From the 1st Feb 2020, Centrelink, Medicare and Child Support government organisations now fall under a broader **Services Australia** agency.



www.servicesaustralia.gov.au

While this doesn't mean any changes to the direct payments and services provided by departments such as Centrelink, Medicare, and Child Support Payment the hope is that Services Australia can help provide a less confusing and more streamlined avenue for customers to find the information and support they require.

One of the recently updated features found on the website is the 'Payment and Service Finder'. You can complete a simple online tool which provides information about which payments and services you may be eligible for.



The Payment Finder will go through some questions about your situation to help identify which Centrelink payments may assist your situation.

Many other reputable services external to Services Australia can be explored by selecting your state or territory and areas of interest such as employment, legal services, money, housing, mental health, relationships and more.

If you are having difficulty navigating these services please call MS Connect 1800 042 138 or contact us by email msconnect@ms.org.au

PEER SUPPORT MEETING TIMES

CIRCULAR HEAD

Meets: First Monday of the Month 7:00 - 8:30pm
Venue: Circular Head Rural Health Centre,
Smithton
Next Meeting: Monday 6 April
*We are combining face to face group &
Telegroup

KINGSTON

Meets: Second Tuesday of the month,
12 midday - 2:00pm
Venue: Kingston
Next Meeting: Tuesday 7 April

Date change for April, First Tuesday

Guest speaker: RACT Community Team,
misunderstood road rules

EASTERN SHORE

Meets: Second Friday of the month, 10:30 - 12
midday
Venue: Bellerive
Next Meeting: TBC due to Easter break
Guest speaker: Social gathering/lunch

GLENORCHY

Meets: Last Monday of the month, 6:00 - 8:00pm
Venue: Glenorchy
Next Meetings: Monday 30 March & Monday 27
April
Guest Speaker: Social gathering

NORTHERN (Launceston) – Social Group

Meets: Second Thursday of the month
Venue: Kings Meadows
Next Meeting: Thursday 9 April
Guest Speaker: Social gathering

DEVONPORT

Casual Coffee Group
Next meeting: TBA

LAUNCESTON UNDER 50'S

Meets: Last Saturday of the month, 10:30am - 12:30pm
Venue: Linc Library, Launceston
Next meeting: Saturday 28 March & Saturday 25 April
Guest Speaker: Social gathering

WYNYARD

Meets: First Wednesday of the month, 2 - 4:00pm
Venue: Wynyard
Next Meeting: Wednesday 1 April
Guest speaker: Coffee catch up

ULVERSTONE

Meets: Fourth Wed of the month, 11:00am - 1:00pm
Venue: Ulverstone
Next Meeting: Wednesday 22 April
Guest speaker: planning & brain storming meeting

MENS PEER SUPPORT GROUP

Meets: Third Friday of the month, 12:30 - 2:30pm
Venue: Hobart
Next Meeting: Friday 17 April
Social gathering, meals available at own expense

NEW NORFOLK

Meets: First Wednesday of the month, 10:30 - 12noon
Venue: New Norfolk
Next Meeting: Wednesday 1 April
Social gathering, coffees and cake etc at own
expense

To join a MS Peer Support Group contact
MS Connect on 1800 042 138 or email
msconnect@ms.org.au and one of our
Peer Support Program Coordinators will
contact you.

RSVP for groups to msconnect@ms.org.au

