



Canberra Region Newsletter

Get moving with us at the MS 2020 Canberra Walk Run + Roll

Join us in Canberra on Sunday 29 March as we walk, run and roll together to make a difference to people living with multiple sclerosis!

That's right – our popular MS Walk + Fun Run has been re-branded as the MS Walk Run + Roll to recognise and celebrate the diversity of our fantastic participants that get moving for people with multiple sclerosis year after year. This year is going to be big as we celebrate 10 years of the walk in Canberra.



It's not too late to get involved and make a real difference in the lives of people living with multiple sclerosis.

Funds raised from the MS Walk Run + Roll help us make sure no one has to face multiple sclerosis alone.

People like Rachel. Her team 'Don't MS with Rachel' raised an impressive \$7,050 in 2019 – a massive \$4,000 more than their original goal! And they will be back in 2020 to continue raising awareness and vital funds.



“It was fantastic to fundraise for MS and give back. They helped me during my darkest of days and if the money I raised helps just one person, that’s amazing,” said Rachel.

Rachel was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis two years ago, when her daughter was just 5 months old. She experiences symptoms like numbness, pins and needles in the lower half of her body, extreme fatigue, heat intolerance, dizziness and brain fog.

And in the early days when things felt overwhelming, Rachel turned to MS for support. “It was a really, really tough time mentally, including a sense of grief. That’s when I reached out to MS Connect and got them to help me.”

Rachel was able to access information to help her better understand multiple sclerosis, it’s impact and how to move forwards with her life and her young family’s future.

“To know support is so readily available is fantastic– you can chat online or by phone and it’s all free. It’s only made free through events like the MS Walk Run + Roll and other fundraising events.” It’s fundraising that made that support possible.

Sign up today to help people like Rachel to live well with multiple sclerosis. For more information and to register visit: mswalk.org.au/event/Canberra



Where: Rond Terrace, Parkes, ACT 2600
When: Sunday 29 March 2020
Start Times: Run – 8:30am, Walk or Roll – 10:30am
Distances: 5KM, 10KM Walk, Run or Roll & 14.4KM Run Only.

The course sets off from Rond Terrace and takes you along the scenic route around the beautiful Lake Burley Griffin past the iconic sites of Canberra!



Understanding MS - Course Ranked Best in the World!!

The FREE online course created by the University of Tasmania's Menzies Institute for Medical Research has been named the best new online course of 2019.

The Understanding Multiple Sclerosis (MS) free online course was developed by the Menzies Institute in collaboration with MS Limited and the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre.

It was the most highly ranked course on Class Central, which lists online courses around the world, based on the thousands of reviews made by users for courses released in 2019.

Understanding MS is designed for people living with MS, their carers and support networks, and healthcare providers as well as anyone with an interest in learning about the disease. Information on risks, symptom management, interventions and lived experiences are given through a series of videos presented by academics, nurses and allied health professionals, and importantly, people living with MS.



The course is currently open for enrolments and the next iteration begins on March 16. For more information or to sign up go to: <https://ms.mooc.utas.edu.au/> For more information about Class Central go to: <https://www.classcentral.com/report/best-free-online-courses-2019/>

Business Development Manager, Clinical Programs Maree Maher was a key collaborator developing the online training and many of the presenters are our own experts, clients and family members. We are very pleased with the number of people from across the world who have completed the training.

MS Connect Bushfire Response

It was a somewhat solemn and anxious return to work on January 2 after the Christmas break knowing that large regions of the Australian east coast was in the midst of battling bushfires and that many of our clients were directly effected either by the fires themselves or the poor air quality as a result.

MS Connect received an influx of calls in response to contact made via text messaging to over 4,000 clients. While some requests were referred back to the emergency relief services on the ground who were best placed to provide assistance, we were able to assist ensuring some essential supplies such as multiple sclerosis medications were able to get through to clients in evacuation centres and we also sent masks to clients who experienced difficulty due to the populated air.

More recently we were able to work directly with the ACT Emergency Control Centre and contact 100 clients in high risk areas of Canberra to identify those who would need assistance with evacuation should the need arise. While most people already had evacuation plans in place with their families, many expressed they were grateful to know that we were aware of them and on hand to assist.

MS Connect also assisted in developing an informative and concise reference on our website www.ms.org.au which identifies agencies and their contacts for assistance if bushfire threatens. Remembering that the best preparation is to already have a plan in place to keep yourself and your loved ones as safe as possible.

We know the impact from bushfire events such as we've been experiencing can carry on for some time after the event. This is not just the loss of property and goods but also the emotional toll.

Beyond Blue <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/bushfires-and-mental-health/> has an informative page about looking after yourself emotionally after a bushfire event.

Unfortunately the Bushfire season isn't over yet but please remember to contact MS Connect 1800 042 138 or at msconnect@ms.org.au if we can be of assistance.

MS Webinars

Manage Pain

Monday 2 March - 6:00pm to 7:00pm

Laura Bruggink is an APA Pain Physiotherapist working at the Hunter Integrated Pain Service. Laura will provide us with a better understanding of pain in multiple sclerosis and strategies to help manage this symptom.

Brain Health

Friday 6 March - 10:00am to 10:30am

This webinar is presented by MS Education Program Coordinator, Andrea Salmon who has a background in Occupational Therapy. Andrea will provide us with an overview of what research tells us about keeping our brains healthy and chat about some strategies to improve brain health for a person living with multiple sclerosis.

Medication Update

Thursday 12 March - 10:00am to 10:30am

MS Nurse Advisor, Jane Bridgman, will provide an update of current medication available for people living with multiple sclerosis

The Value of Pharmacy Reviews

Tuesday 24 March - 10:00am to 10:30am

The webinar is presented by Carbrini Pharmacist, Raisa Brostek. The webinar will cover how your pharmacist can help you, including adherence to medication, cost of medications, side effects of medications, interactions, and storage of medications. Raisa will also provide information about home medication reviews, disease modifying medications and clinical trials.

Mindfulness by Webinar 8-week series (8 classes)

Wednesdays 11 March to 29 April - 1:00pm to 2:00pm (Time to be confirmed)

Cost involved, \$60 for the 8 week program - bursaries available.

Mindfulness has roots in Buddhism, utilising a meditation technique that helps shift your thoughts away from your usual preoccupations and toward an appreciation of the present moment – facilitating a feeling of calmness within yourself and a larger perspective on life.

This Mindfulness by Webinar program is presented by Lydia Vorona from Be Still and will run for 8 weeks. Lydia is a dedicated and experienced mindfulness educator, supporting people to develop greater resilience and wellbeing through the practice of mindfulness.

Contact Details – Education Team:
education@ms.org.au

ACT - 29 March | NSW - 15 March | VIC - 31 May



Join the Volunteer team at the MS Walk Run + Roll Sunday 29 March

Our fundraising events provide an opportunity for us to reach out and connect with the wider community, educate people about MS, and show those that are living with MS that they don't have to face it alone.

Without our amazing team of volunteers, our events just wouldn't be as successful as they are.

In 2019, over \$5.7 million was raised across our events to fund our support services. This wouldn't have been possible without our team of over 1600 volunteers!

The new rebranded **MS Walk Run + Roll**, held this year on **Sunday March 29** starts at Rond Terrace with the 5km, 10km, and 14.4km route along the scenic waters edge. We are looking for volunteers to assist at the Event Village as well as out on the course, assisting our participants and fundraisers in having a wonderful experience.

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, learn new skills, and most of all, have a wonderful day out in support of MS.

If you, or someone you know is interested in volunteering in this event, please contact Robyn on 02 8484 1345 or email actvolunteer@ms.org.au – More information is also available on our website at www.mswalk.org.au/volunteer
We hope to see you there!

Go for Gold Scholarships back again in 2020

People in the ACT living with MS who are registered clients of Multiple Sclerosis Ltd will be eligible to apply for an MS Go for Gold scholarship when applications open again in April.

Since the excitement of last year's awards, when 55 deserving people across the ACT, Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales were awarded sums of up to \$3,000 to achieve a long-held dream, MS has been reviewing the program to make it better for everyone.

We've already agreed that the value of the awards will be raised, and the method of application will be simplified, with full details of the new program being made available just prior to applications opening in April. The awards categories will also be made clearer, although the most popular aspirations for applicants, such as for the arts, education, business support and wellness activities, including sports and travel, will still be covered.

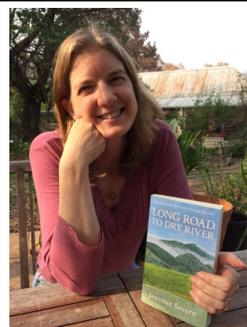
In the meantime MS clients will be invited to take part in an on-line survey to give their views on the Go for Gold scholarship program, so that the improvements we make are driven by those people who will be both eligible and potentially benefit from an award.

The Go for Gold scholarships have been running alongside the MS 24-Hour Mega Swim events for many years and are fully funded by fundraising from Mega Swim events across all four states.

MS CEO, John Blewonski said, "Having seen at first hand the value Go for Gold scholarships add to recipients' lives, we are committed to continuing the MS "Go for Gold" scholarship awards and are keen to make sure that the awards are valued, fairly given and celebrated in the MS community. We also want to make it easier for as many people as possible to apply"

Watch out for communications from the MSL Community Fundraising team in April and start to think about what dream you could achieve with an MS Go for Gold scholarship.

Ameera is an international para-archer and her dream is to represent Australia in the 2020 Paralympics in Tokyo. Knowing that she needed to find a way to buy a tailored bow to be able to compete at a higher level and increase her performance, Ameera applied for a 'Go for Gold' Scholarship – and she got it! Since using her scholarship to buy new equipment, Ameera's personal best improved dramatically and at the start of 2019, she placed first in three heats at the Australian Paranaionals.



Long Road to Dry River

In 2014 Jennifer (Sahi) Severn was awarded a Go for Gold Scholarship to engage a life-writing mentor. She'd been writing snippets of her life story for years and wanted to turn them into a manuscript. In 2018 that manuscript was shortlisted for the Finch Prize for Memoir, and this year Jennifer launched *Long Road to Dry River*.

Family dysfunction, inappropriate relationships, life as an 'orange person', a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis ... Jen's life was a search for belonging—until circumstances conspired to land her in Quaama, a small rural village on Dry River on the far south coast of New South Wales.

'The Go for Gold Scholarship was a game-changer,' she says. 'My mentor, Rae Luckie, introduced me to some great techniques for unlocking memories and that was the time that I started taking my writing seriously.'

Long Road to Dry River is available from your local bookshop, online bookstores, or as an eBook on Kindle or Kobo. You can follow Jen's blog at www.jennifersevern.com.au

Dance for Wellbeing: For Everyone

This weekly dance class is held in Belconnen, designed for adults with physical and neurological challenges, who want to keep their body and brain active and healthy, regardless of mobility, skill or age. People who experience Multiple Sclerosis, Chronic Pain, Chronic Fatigue, RSI, Arthritis or other various physical challenges, are especially welcome to attend, with carers if required. *“You can do this class – it’s fun! It gives you a lift in your spirits!”*

Dance is a unique vehicle, combining multiple approaches to movement and exercise, confidence building and an improved quality of life. The hour long class is made up of a variety of exercises to music, with seated and standing options throughout, guided by a team of highly qualified dance practitioners.

No previous experience is necessary, and everyone — with and without walkers and wheel chairs, family members, friends—are all welcome to participate.

Costs - \$10/person, per class Pay on the day. Companion Card holders receive free admission. More info - Wear clothes comfortable to move in, wear light shoes, and bring a bottle of water.

Time - Fridays - 12.00 pm to 1.00 pm

Location - Belconnen Arts Centre, 118 Emu Bank, Belconnen

Contact - Belconnen Arts Centre Ph: 02 6173 3300 or www.belcoarts.com.au

Yoga for Everyone

There is a Dru yoga class at Gloria McKerrow House at 10.30 am on Monday. There is just under an hour of gentle movements and ½ hour of guided relaxation. Dru Yoga is for everyone, regardless of your physical ability. There are adaptations of all movements, so everyone can benefit.

What is it?

Dru Yoga is a graceful and potent form of yoga, based on soft flowing movements, directed breathing and visualisation. With its foundations set firmly in ancient yogic tradition, Dru works on body, mind and spirit to rejuvenate your whole being. It improves strength and flexibility, increases core stability, builds a heightened feeling of positivity, and brings deep states of relaxation.

Designed to be practised by people of all abilities, all fitness levels and all age groups, Dru is a style of yoga that can be quickly dipped into or learnt in more depth over a lifetime.

Barbara Baikie is the Yoga teacher. She is a qualified Dru yoga teacher. Come along and try it. The first class is free. Look forward to seeing you there



Get a Head Start



benefits for life

Rehabilitation, Healthy Ageing & Wellness

MS Get a Head Start - Empowering those living with MS

An innovative six week high intensity exercise and education program to empower self management. The program focuses on building self-management so you have the skills to continue once its complete. It is structured around a framework of six core principles of exercise specific to MS.

This program is made up of 2 sessions per week for 6 weeks and will cover 6 Education topics: fatigue management, exercise prescription, pain management, cognitive and psychological wellbeing, other services and where to from here.

To find out more about this program please contact Neurospace on 02 6162 0450, www.ms-ghs.com or www.neurospace.com.au

Mindfulness Meditation Group

The Canberra Mindfulness Meditation Group meets at Gloria McKerrow House on the last Friday of each month (except December).

Our fun and informal meetings include things like discussion of meditation, meditation experiences and resources that we've found helpful.

We make sure that we include at least one meditation.

We often go the People with MS (PwMS) lunch that happens shortly after we finish.

Contact Richard ([0400 287-770](tel:0400287770)) if you have any questions

The 2020 Canberra MS 24 Hour Mega Swim is back again in May 2020!

When: 12.00 pm Saturday 2 May to 12.00 pm Sunday 3 May at the Australian Institute Of Sport at Leverrier Crescent, Bruce, ACT 2617.

Get a team together, challenge yourselves, and swim your heart out for 2 hours, 10 minutes or all night - **the swim roster is completely up to you.**

For more information to register or donate please visit www.msmeegaswim.org.au or call us on 1300 733 690.



Peer Support & Self Help Groups

Please find below the ACT Peer Support and Self-Help Groups currently meeting in and around the ACT. Telegroups, that run over the phone are also listed. To register your interest, please contact MS Connect™ Freecall 1800 042 138 or email msconnect@ms.org.au.



MS Peer Support Groups

- **Young People Living With MS (under 35s)** Bi-monthly, first Saturday of the month.
- **People with MS Support Group, Gloria McKerrow House, Deakin** Last Friday of Every Month (except December), 12.30 pm to approx. 2.00 pm
- **Batemans Bay - Eurobodalla MS Peer Support Group** 1st Thurs of month, 11.30am–1.30pm
- **Cooma/Berridale Peer Support Group** 1st Wednesday of each month, time and venue varies

Self Help Groups

- **HSCT for MS Support Group, Deakin** 1st Monday of each month, 5.30pm-7pm
- **Taking Control of MS Group, Deakin** 2nd Saturday of each month, 2pm – 4pm
- **Art Group, Deakin**, Every Second Friday Afternoon, 12.30pm – 2.30pm
- **Mindfulness Practice Meeting, Deakin** Monthly, Last Friday of Each Month, 10.30am – 12pm.

MS Peer Support Telegroups

- **Men's support group** First Thursday of the month – 1.30pm to 2.30pm
- **Women's support group** Fourth Monday of the month – 12.30pm to 1.30pm
- **Women in 40 to 64 group** Third Tuesday of the month – 10am to 11am
- **Over 65's group** First Tuesday of the month – 10.30am – 11.30am
- **After hours group for working people** Second Wednesday night of the month – 7.00pm to 8.00pm
- **Family and friends telegroup** First Tuesday of the month – 7.30pm to 8.30pm
- **General support groups** First Monday of the month – 11am to 12pm, Second Monday of the month – 7pm to 8pm, Second Tuesday of the month – 7pm to 8pm
- **Mums with MS support group** Second Tuesday of the month – 1pm to 2pm
- **Greek Speaking Telegroups for People living with multiple sclerosis**