



Compliments of the Season and a happy New Year from all at MS



MS Nurse Advisor Visit - 26-28 February 2020



Jane will be in Canberra on **26-28 February 2020** for the **MS Nurse Advisor @ Deakin** face to face clinic. If you would like to book an appointment to see Jane on one of these days, please call **MS Connect on 1800 042 138**.

If you are unable to attend a face to face clinic, remember the MS Nurse Advisor service is available Monday to Friday - 9am to 5pm for anyone who may have queries about multiple sclerosis, symptoms, medications and general wellbeing. MS Nurse Advisor appointments are available over the phone, or via Skype or Facetime.

Deakin Office Christmas Closure

The Deakin Office will close at 1.00 pm on Friday 20 December 2019 and will reopen on Thursday 2 January 2020 at 9.00 am.



MS Connect Availability at Christmas

The MS Connect Team will be taking a break for the holiday season from Christmas Day 25 December 2019 and return to work on the 2 January 2020.



MS Connect

Mark Crockett from NSW credits MS Connect with saving his life by linking him into services and supports during his darkest days.

'Like a lot of men, I don't open up easily. But the woman who answered my call was so reassuring, I immediately told her everything-that I was desperately depressed, that I'd lost hope and I couldn't see the future. "She was totally calm, and she had a soft voice that it made me feel as though all would be well. And as she talked me through all the services, she could put me in touch with, I could feel hope rising somewhere deep inside me again. "Whatever problems I faced, she convinced me that MS Connect could help me find a solution. For loneliness, there were peer support groups. For money worries, there were social work advisors waiting to help. And for my depression, they could help me find a counsellor near my home.' Excerpt from Christmas MS Appeal

Did you know that MS Connect have extended their hours to be even more accessible for you? Our phone line **1800 042 138** is available from 8am to 6pm. If we don't answer your call if we are busy, please remember to leave a message and one of our experienced MS Connect Specialists will get back to you as soon as they can. Remember, you can always email with your enquiry to msconnect@ms.org.au or use either our web enquiry form or 'Live Chat' functions on the website www.ms.org.au.

The MS Connect Team members work hard to ensure people living with multiple sclerosis do not face multiple sclerosis alone. We have an active program of getting in touch with registered clients we have not had contact with for some time. Often, when they receive our calls, the person living with multiple sclerosis is grateful to be connected back to services as they may have lost touch, or they are unaware of all the services we provide. The MS Connect Team get a great buzz in reconnecting people with our services as we recognise how valuable this may be to someone who is feeling isolated.

Opportunity to participate in research into healthcare for people living with Multiple Sclerosis

Researchers at the Australian National University (ANU) are investigating the healthcare experiences of people living with multiple sclerosis (MS), as well as their healthcare providers. Through one-on-one interviews, the researchers will examine healthcare for people living with MS from multiple perspectives. The findings from this study may identify the areas in healthcare for people living with MS that are working well or could be changed.

What does participation involve? Participants must be 18 years or over with a confirmed diagnosis of MS or are MS healthcare professionals (including neurologists, GP's and MS nurses). Once you provide consent, people living with MS will be asked to conduct a 10-minute online questionnaire prior to the interview to provide background information e.g. type of MS, current signs and symptoms and treatment. All participants will take part in a single one-on-one interview which may take up to 40 minutes at the ANU, over the phone, or via skype. In the interview you will be asked about your experiences of MS healthcare across different appointment types including appointments that are focused on diagnosis, management and ongoing care.

Interested? To find out more, please contact eluned.price@anu.edu.au or go to the Our Health in Our Hands website at <http://www.anu.edu.au/research/research-initiatives/our-health-in-our-hands>.

This study has been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol number 2019/684)



Christmas Lights For MS

They're back again!

James and Ben are ready to delight Canberrans with their annual Christmas Lights For MS display.

Check out our write up on their past years of excellent fundraising as well as the 9 News clip from 2018 showing off what is now believed to be Canberra's largest solar powered Christmas display on the 'News' section of the Do It For MS website.

You can visit the display throughout December at both Stacy Street and Ruthven Street, Gowrie ACT or you can also donate via <https://www.doitforms.org.au/campaign/Christmas-Lights-for-MS>

Thank you to our wonderful 2019 MS Community Fundraisers

A HUGE shout out to all of our fantastic community fundraisers from 2019!



We really appreciate all the time and effort you put into your fundraising events and challenges this year and look forward to assisting even more community members next year. Don't forget to reach out for helpful advice or suggestions any time of year via communityfundraising@ms.org.au or on 03 9845 2825.

Peer Support for Working People living with MS

Working people live a busy and hectic lifestyle. For a person working and living with MS, there is a juggling act of managing time between health appointments, work, family commitments and social activities.

The MS Peer Support Program helps people with MS access practical and emotional support from people who also live with MS. The program is running programs that are tailored to people who are working and would like to maintain a healthy lifestyle while living with MS.

The MS Peer Support Program runs the following programs for people working and living with MS:

After Hours Telelink for Working People Living with MS

A phone-based, short-term Peer Support program facilitated by the MS Peer Support Coordinators. Sessions are held weekly over six weeks with each session lasting 90 minutes. It's suitable for when joining an ongoing group doesn't suit your needs and you are time poor but would like to access information to live well with MS and to chat to others in a similar life stage. The next scheduled telelink will start February 2020.

After hours Telegroup for working people

Links people working and living with MS over the phone, once a month on the second Wednesday night of every month at 7pm – 8pm. So you can dial in after work with a cuppa to unwind and chat with other likeminded people.

Face to Face Dinner Peer Support Groups

There are also face to face dinner groups that tailor to working people. If you are working and living with MS and interested in accessing these supports, please contact MS Connect on 1800 042 138 or email msconnect@ms.org.au



Partners and Parents supporting People with MS - More Peers Needed

Family members often call MS Connect wanting to speak to another person who can relate to their situation and has experience in supporting a person with MS. The support, information and empathy provided by peers can be vital in supporting families in adjusting to a diagnosis of MS and offering valuable support. The Peer Support Program currently needs more people to share their valuable knowledge and experience. If you are a partner or parent of someone living with multiple sclerosis, please contact MS Connect on 1800 042 138 to find out how you can join our Peer Support program.

YourSay Community Panel

Help shape Canberra by joining the new YourSay Community Panel!

To become a panel member, first tell us a bit about yourself. Next, we'll email you opportunities to participate in surveys and other activities on a range of topics.

Then you will be able to see the results of the research and how your views were used. To thank you for your time, you will go into monthly prize draws.

The new YourSay Community Panel will complement this site, which will continue to be our primary place online for community conversations about particular issues. By contrast, members of the YourSay Community Panel will regularly be asked for views and opinions on a whole range of topics. Sign up at www.yoursaypanel.act.gov.au.

There are currently many projects underway and to provide feedback, visit <https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/projects> and have your say.

Have Your Say!

Webinars

- Bladder and Bowel Changes in MS:** Wednesday 4 December, 3.00pm - 4.00pm
Coping with the Heat: Tuesday 10 December, 10.00am - 11.00am
MS Researcher Update: Wednesday 11 December, 3.00pm - 4.00pm
New Year's Resolution - Beat the Blues: Wednesday 15 January, 6.00pm-7.00pm
New Year's Resolution - Managing my Anxiety: Monday 20 January, 6.00pm-7.00pm
New Year's Resolution - Manage my Symptoms: Thursday 23 January, 10.00am-11.00am
New Year's Resolution - Manage Pain: Tuesday 28 January, 6.00pm-7.00pm
NDIS Information Sessions: Various webinars and workshops



To register your interest, please contact MS Connect 1800 042 138 or email msconnect@ms.org.au

Peer Support and 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 Friday of each month, 5.30pm-7pm
- **MS Café Group** 2nd Wednesday of each month, 10.00 am
- **Taking Control of MS Group, Deakin** 2nd Saturday of each month, 2pm – 4pm
- **Art Group, Deakin** Weekly, 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** Fourth Monday of the month – 11am to 12pm.

