



AUSTRALIA
Giving life back

MS Update

Spring 2011

Inside this issue

CEO's Message	2
Events Update	3
Report on the NDIS	4
Client Services Corner	6
Go for Gold Scholarships	8
MS & Employment Forum	10

Breakthrough Research Holds Clues About MS Cause

In one of the largest human genetic studies ever undertaken, scientists have identified the major common genetic variants that contribute to the cause of the devastating neurologic disease, multiple sclerosis (MS).

The results of the study have been published in the prestigious scientific journal, *Nature*. They represent years of work by the International Multiple Sclerosis Genetics Consortium (IMSGC) involving more than 250 researchers in 15 countries. Australian scientists have played a significant role and more than 1000 Australians with MS contributed DNA samples.

The study confirmed the presence of up to 57 MS genes with a remarkable pattern that shows that the reason some people get MS and others don't is largely due to subtle, inherited differences in immune function. It points to a pivotal role for T cells – the 'orchestra leaders' of the immune system and makes it clear that MS is primarily an immunologic disease.

The Australian and New Zealand contribution was led by Prof Graeme Stewart, a Clinical Immunologist in the Westmead Millennium Institute, University of Sydney. It involved a consortium of 18 researchers from 5 states and New Zealand (in a group called ANZgene). Prof

Stewart is one of five governance members of the IMSGC (with colleagues from Cambridge, Harvard, Yale and UCSF) and a member of the 11 person Project Direction Committee for the *Nature* study.

"Discovering so many new leads is an enormous step towards understanding the cause of MS," Professor Stewart said. "Most importantly, for people with MS, these genes also strengthen the case for immunologic treatments currently in clinical trials and point to new therapeutic approaches." A/Prof David Booth, the Australian representative on IMSGC Strategy Group, added, "It is amazing that we have over 50 MS genes when as recently as 2006, we had only one. Such is the

"It is amazing that we have over 50 MS genes when as recently as 2006, we had only one."



continued on page 2

cover story continued

enormous power of the new research tools coupled to a massive international collaborative effort.”

Previous Australian research has suggested a link between Vitamin D deficiency and an increased risk of multiple sclerosis and the ANZgene consortium identified a vitamin D gene on chromosome 12. The international study has now identified a second vitamin D gene and provides insight into a link between genetic and environmental risk factors.

Multiple Sclerosis Research Australia (MSRA), together with the Australian Government, has funded MS genetic research over the past ten years.

MSRA's Executive Director Jeremy Wright welcomed the breakthrough announcement.

“This is a terrific milestone which brings welcome new hope to people with MS and great credit to the researchers. The Westmead Millennium Institute and ANZgene groups played a significant role in this international effort and have put Australia in the front line of potential new findings in both the diagnosis and treatment of MS,” Mr Wright said.

The genetic testing and statistical analyses for the *Nature* paper were funded by the Wellcome Trust in the UK and the study was led from Cambridge and Oxford Universities.

MS Tasmania involvement

The MS Society of Tasmania is proud of its involvement in the largest human genetic studies ever undertaken in which scientists have identified the major common genetic variants that contribute to the cause of the devastating neurologic disease, multiple sclerosis.

Tasmania, as the state with the highest prevalence of MS in the country, has contributed significantly to this research through its active MS community with 70 percent of Tasmanian clients taking part in this study, the highest rate in Australia.

Our active MS community and research into finding a cure for MS is reliant upon the support of the local community and our fund raising efforts and events such as MSFest which will be held on March 3, 2012.

“This is a terrific milestone which brings welcome new hope to people with MS and great credit to the researchers.”

CEOs COLUMN

Introducing Dale Eastley



I left home at Sulphur Creek at 17 to come to Hobart for a job where I have since spent most of my working life. I am married with a son, Andrew, who has commenced a career in electronics. I have been a lifelong follower of Carlton Football Club and am

very interested in cricket and eagerly follow the fortunes of any Tasmanian cricketer. I enjoy house improvement projects (which is important as our house was built in 1930), walking, fishing and more recently, in conjunction with Andrew, restoring 1970s Datsun 1600s.

As at the time of writing this article I have been with The MS Society of Tasmania for two weeks. I am starting to get my head around the important issues. It is clear that the staff at MS TAS are dedicated to providing excellent service to their clients, donors and key supporters.

In this time I have met all the staff and attended a Support Group meeting at Smithton. I am in the process of determining, in conjunction with Mary Langdon, Manager Client Services, when I will be attending other support group meetings. These meetings will be an opportunity for me to listen and share.

MS TAS is engaged with the Department of Health & Human Services in a structured Quality Improvement Program. MS TAS has successfully participated in Stages 1 through 4 of a 6 Stage process. The Stage 4 report was submitted and within 3 days the Department of Health & Human Services had provided a highly complimentary report which in essence stated that they can see that MS TAS is totally committed to quality improvement. These comments are particularly pleasing for all those actively involved in this important major project.

At its June 2011 meeting, the Board approved the Strategic Plan for 2011-12 and it is now in the hands of the Leadership Team to progress the improvement issues, including continuation of existing services and the development of new initiatives for the benefit of clients and staff. I will regularly report on the progress of our achievements.

I look forward to catching up with you at an event in the near future.

Events Update



The MS Society Invites you to bring back the tradition and elegance of yesteryear at Hadleys Hotel for our annual High Tea.

Get a group of your friends, family or colleagues together and enjoy a relaxing and elegant Sunday afternoon of delicate savouries, scrumptious desserts, champagne and tea.

There will be a lucky door prize, a great raffle and lots of fun to be had. All proceeds from this event will support Tasmanians living with MS.

Don't miss your opportunity to attend this sought after annual event.

We do hope you can join us for the 2011 MS Society High Tea as we look forward to seeing you there!

Date: Sunday 18 Sept 2011
Time: 2pm – 4pm
Venue: Hadleys Hotel
 34 Murray St, Hobart
Cost: \$39 per person

RSVP by 15 September 2011:
 To RSVP and purchase tickets please contact Stacey at the MS Society on 6220 1111 or email aboutus@mstas.org.au



MONA



MONA MS
Melbourne Cup
 LUNCHEON & ART EXHIBITION

1 November 2011
 12pm – 4pm



The MS Society of Tasmania invites you to celebrate and embrace *"the race that stops the nation"* at this prestigious event held in the beautiful surrounds of world renowned MONA.

Enjoy a first class, three course meal with wine and entertainment plus an exhibition of original Tasmanian artwork. Watch the races on large screens and place your bets at the onsite TOTE outlet while you spend the afternoon entertaining clients, networking with colleagues or simply enjoying a great day with friends.

We invite you to explore our art exhibition and take part in the silent auction fundraiser. There will be a range of original art, sculpture and photography to bid on from local Tasmanian Artists. This event is a real opportunity to purchase a fantastic piece at well below gallery prices.

Highlights include:

- MC – Tim Ferguson
- A range of established and emerging artists displaying works in multiple styles.
- See 'An Artist at Work', and bid to win the piece painted during the event.

Cost:	Per person	\$135
	Early Bird by 1/10/10	\$125
	Red Diamond Member	\$115
	Table of 10	\$1,200
Ferry:	Per person return	\$15
	Depart: Brooke St Pier	11.00am
	Return: Brooke St Pier	4.30pm

To book please call the MS Society on 6220 1111

Productivity Commission's Final Report on the NDIS

Productivity Commission's Final Report: the benefits of an NDIS outweigh the costs

Delivered to the Australian Government on 9 August 2011, the Productivity Commission's Final Report on Disability Care and Support is similar to the Draft Report, with a few important improvements.

The additional annual cost of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), when fully implemented, would be \$6.5 billion. Significantly, from a detailed economic analysis the Productivity Commission (PC) concludes that the benefits of the NDIS "would significantly outweigh the costs" and that "the funding of the scheme is feasible and manageable".

The central message of the Final Report is that "a coherent and certain system for people with disability is required – with much more and better-directed resourcing, a national approach, and a shift in decision-making to people with a disability and their carers".

A National Model

The PC recommends that the NDIS be a national system administered by a single Commonwealth statutory authority – the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). This national system would feature:

- consistent national eligibility criteria, assessment tools, arrangements for assessors, and access to the full range of necessary supports;
- certainty of funding;
- the model and management of an insurance scheme, including the collection and analysis of data, and a national research capacity;
- a shift from block funding and a service-centred model to one in which people with disability and their carers have greater control, whether that be

to cash out their package, or to have their needs met in flexible ways by providers (including having the choice of service providers and portability of funding);

- nationally-consistent and publicly-available information on the performance of service providers;
- a focus on individual needs and outcomes;
- local area coordinators, disability support organisations and a wider community role for not-for-profit providers; and
- a national service provider strategy (capacity building and attitude change) and workforce development strategy.

The PC acknowledges that the NDIA would need to be responsive to local needs – assisted by it having a strong regional presence.

Eligibility

The NDIS would be structured around three tiers of support: Tier 1, focussed on minimising the impacts of disability through the promotion of awareness and inclusion; Tier 2, focussed on ensuring appropriate support from any system through the provision of information, referral, web services and community engagement; and Tier 3, delivering

individually-tailored and funded supports.

The PC estimates that Tier 3 would support 410,000 people – an increase of 50,000 since the Draft Report. The increase primarily reflects the broadening of the eligibility criteria to include people with significant and enduring psychiatric disability who need regular support to live in the community. Intellectual disability is no longer named as an eligible condition, but is covered under eligibility for support defined in terms of functional limitations rather than conditions. Alongside Tier 2, the PC proposes that all governments would continue to support a range of community and carer support services, including some existing or modified

"The PC recommends that the NDIS be a national system administered by a single Commonwealth statutory authority – the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)."

Home and Community Care services, for people with low-level or short-term disability (largely block-funded, with some limited user charges).

The NDIS would include the current range of disability supports, with the exception of Disability Employment Services (DES). The rationale for excluding DES is that many of these service users with mild to moderate disabilities would not meet the NDIS's eligibility criteria, and that there are benefits from maintaining a single coherent system for open employment services. Australian Disability Enterprises and transition-to-work programs would be in the NDIS.

The NDIS would not be means tested and co-payments would not apply.

Operation

The assessment, funding and planning process is critical to the operation of the NDIS. It would:

- determine the tier/s of the NDIS that would be appropriate for each person who contacts the system;
- make referrals to mainstream supports outside the NDIS (mainly for people in Tier 2); and
- for Tier 3 people, assist in the development of a personal plan, assess the nature, frequency and intensity of support needs, consider what supports could be provided informally, and translate the identified reasonable needs into an individualised support package to be funded by the NDIS.

Most people would receive an entitlement to particular supports (such as hours of person-centred support, aids and appliances and/or therapy) and would then choose one or more service providers. Once these arrangements were in place, the NDIA would pay service providers directly for the services they delivered.

A person wanting assistance to arrange services would be able to get help from a Disability Support Organisation. A person opting to 'cash out' and manage a support package themselves would need to meet strong accountability requirements.

Challenges

The PC recognises that an entitlement system would increase demand for disability support staff, but concludes (optimistically) that the creation of an NDIS "will translate to greater pay, more jobs, better working conditions, the capacity for innovative practice, enough resources to do the job properly, recognition of the critical role of workers, more choice of employers, and greater satisfaction from working in a system that achieves better outcomes for the people they support." NDS believes significant effort and investment will be needed to develop and implement a workforce strategy

that delivers the workforce required to underpin the NDIS.

National Disability Service

National Disability Service (NDS) is pleased to see the PC acknowledge the valuable role of not-for-profit organisations in delivering services to people with disability. Although the Final Report continues to recommend a strong market approach, it does reflect on the major challenges facing service providers and notes that investment in the sector will be required.

To improve the ability of people with disability to participate in community life, the PC recommends that the NDIA:

- forms a 'compact' with not-for-profit disability service providers to promote community engagement and employment for people with disability;
- offers modest grants to increase the engagement of people with disability in community activities; and
- undertakes local initiatives, including improving access to buildings and public spaces.

The NDIA would also consult with not-for-profit organisations in relation to new 'community capacity building' or social inclusion' initiatives.

Implementation

The NDIS would be implemented in stages, commencing in July 2014 with pilots or 'launch regions' of around 10,000 clients per region, allowing the design to be fine-tuned. One year later, the NDIS would be extended to cover all of Australia but limited to all new cases of significant disability and some of the groups most disadvantaged by current arrangements.

Full national implementation would be achieved by 2018-19.

The National Injury Insurance Scheme (NIIS)

The NIIS would operate in parallel to the NDIS, providing long-term support to all people who have a catastrophic injury. Its structure would be a federation of existing and new accident insurance schemes, which would cover (nearly) all causes of catastrophic injury, including those related to motor vehicle accidents, medical treatment, criminal injury and general accidents within the community or at home. The establishment of the NIIS would remove common law rights to sue for future care and support needs, but people would still be allowed to sue for economic loss and pain and suffering.

Implementation of the NIIS would be achieved by 2015, with a review of the scheme (and whether it should be combined with the NDIS) to occur in 2020.

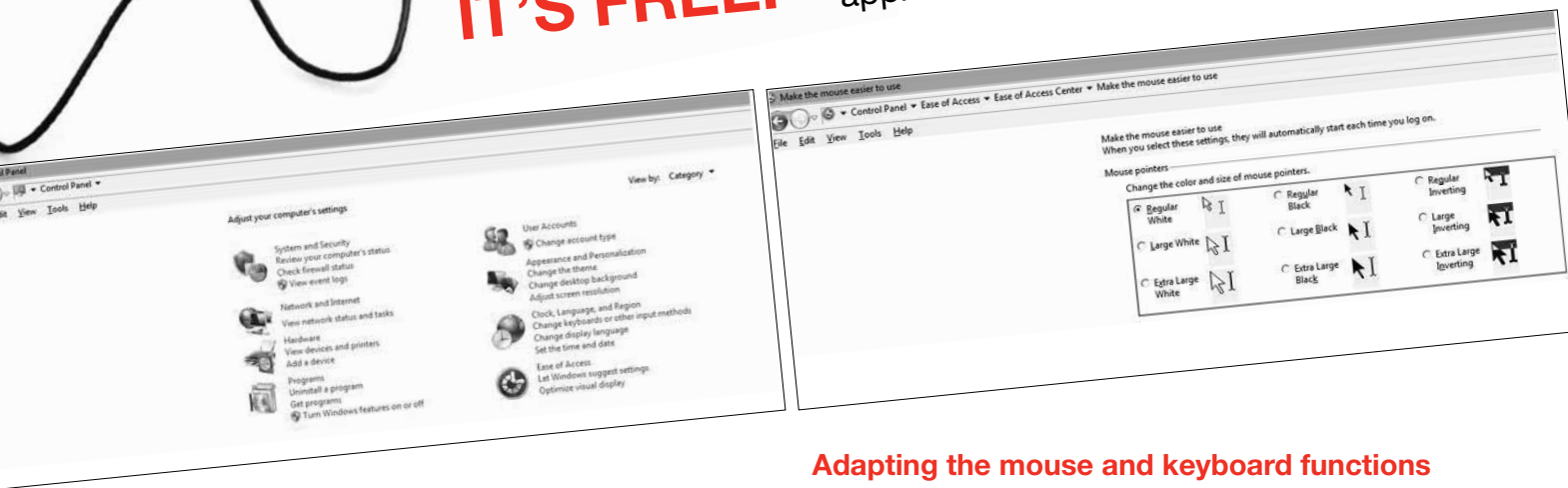
Client Services Corner

Welcome to the first Client Services Corner! In this section of the newsletter we will keep you up to date on all the latest news from the Client Services Team and advise you of upcoming events. Ideas to help people to live well with their MS will also feature in each edition.

Adapting Your Computer

IT'S FREE!

Operating a computer can become a challenge for a person with tremors, reduced motor function, joint stiffness or impaired vision. But there are numerous ways of adapting the computer to minimize the impact of these symptoms, and the good news is that your computer is probably already equipped with the applications to make this happen.



Whether your computer is a PC or an Apple, it will have a built-in range of accessibility features designed to make the computer easier to use. Using these applications it is possible to magnify your screen to make it easier to read, make text larger, or change the way your mouse and keyboard function.

While this article will focus on some of the options available on computers using Windows operating systems. Apple computers have similar features, which are explained on their website at www.apple.com/accessibility.

Making the screen easier to see

There are some simple ways to make your screen easier to see. Go to the **Start Menu** and open the **Control Panel**. You will find links that will enable you to change the appearance of the screen and to personalise it. For example, it is possible to make text and other items larger (or smaller), adjust the screen resolution, adjust the contrast or switch on the magnifier. This last function will allow you to magnify a part of your screen by hovering over it with the mouse pointer.

Adapting the mouse and keyboard functions

In the same section of the **Control Panel** there are also instructions for ways to make your mouse and keyboard easier to use.

You can make the mouse pointer larger, change its colour or even use the number keys on your keyboard to move the mouse pointer. You can also slow down the mouse speed, change the configuration of the mouse buttons to allow for right or left handed use, and adjust the speed of the mouse click to help you to control double-clicks.

For ease of keyboard use, the **Sticky Keys** function allows you to press one key at a time when typing a key combination (eg Ctrl+Alt+Delete to restart the computer). This function is helpful if you have trouble holding down more than one key at a time.

The **Filter Keys** function helps you to avoid typing errors caused by holding down a key too long or brushing against the wrong keys. Filter Keys will ignore or slow down brief or repeated keystrokes.

The **On-Screen Keyboard** allows you to type using the mouse (or another pointing device) by clicking keys on a picture of a keyboard on the screen.



There are also a number of **Keyboard Shortcuts** to enable you to use the keyboard instead of the mouse. Here are a few examples:

- **Ctrl+Esc** will open the Start Menu
- **Alt+F4** will quit the program you have open
- **Ctrl+B** will make the text you are typing bold
- **Ctrl+C** will copy highlighted text or other items

A full list of Keyboard Shortcuts can be found at www.support.microsoft.com/kb/126449

Need more information or guidance?

Visit the Microsoft Accessibility website at www.microsoft.com/enable/training to find out more. This site has detailed instructions on accessing all the in-built functions in all the different PC operating systems. So whether your computer is a recent model or an older version, there are features that will help you to use it more easily.

Other assistive technologies

In addition to these free features, there are numerous software programs available online – including some that are free – and assistive technologies that can be purchased. Some organisations in Tasmania that can provide advice about items to suit your needs are listed below.

The Independent Living Centre

Tel: 03 6334 5899
 Email: ilc@ilctas.asn.au
 Web: www.ilctas.asn.au

The National Disability Coordination Officer Program – North and Northwest

Tel: 03 6324 3758
 Email: darlene.mclennan@utas.edu.au

The National Disability Coordination Officer Program – South

Tel: 03 6226 1796
 Email: Debbie.Hindle@utas.edu.au
 Web: www.ndcotas.com.au/education-and-training/assistive-technology

New Staff Members



Darren Radley, Counsellor

I am very excited and looking forward to my new role here in the south of the state at The Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society of Tasmania.

I have been counselling for the past seven years. In 2006 I completed a two year Diploma of Professional Counselling and commenced in private practice. In addition to my private practice I started working as a counsellor for an Employee Assisted Program (EAP) counselling agency here in Hobart. In 2008, to increase my counselling knowledge and training I commenced a Masters in Health Science (Sexual Health) off-campus through The University of Sydney.

My role here at The MS Society of Tasmania is as a counsellor assisting people living with MS. This role will involve helping where I can to assist the person living with MS with the emotional, psychological and physical changes associated with the disease. On a personal note I am very much a fanatical football (soccer for non-purists) follower and enjoy spending time with my wife and two boys in my spare time, but not in that order.



Michael Bowman, Keeping Cool Campaign Officer

Prior to my position at the MS Society of Tasmania I have worked in legal practices in Hobart since 1978. My last role was at the Hobart Community Legal Service whereby

I worked in Child Support and gave legal advice to the Hobart Family Relationships Centre.

I retired from legal practice in May but still wanted to continue working in a part time capacity and the role here fit in with that. The role of Keeping Cool Campaign Officer is to run a campaign on behalf of the MS Society of Tasmania to convince the government to provide power concessions for people living with MS who struggle with the heat in summer and have the need to use air conditioners. The campaign will run until the Budget in 2012 and successful campaigns have recently been run in Queensland and South Australia and we are hoping those results will be seen here.

On a personal note, I am also a keen football (real football - AFL!) follower of (unfortunately) Melbourne Football Club. I also play Golf. I look forward to my association with the MS Society of Tasmania and hopefully a successful outcome to the campaign for our clients.

Go for Gold Scholarships

The Hobart and Launceston 24 Hour mega swims raised \$33,125 for the Tasmanian **Go for Gold Scholarships**. These scholarships were developed to create an opportunity for people living with MS to follow their dreams whether these might be focused upon sport, music, the arts, travel, education or employment.

The **Go for Gold Scholarships** will be administered by MS Tasmania. Applicants may be nominated or apply themselves. Only two criteria apply for being eligible to apply/ be nominated for a **Go for Gold Scholarship**:

- The person must be a registered client of MS Tasmania.
- The person must have a confirmed diagnosis of multiple sclerosis.



There is no age limit. If an elderly person in their eighties wished their entire life to have piano lessons, or a young aspiring musician was seeking professional development, and were not in a financial position to do so, they can apply for a \$2,000 to \$3,000 Go for Gold Scholarship. The unique nature of these scholarships is that there is an equal chance for all.

More information about these scholarships will be forwarded to clients in the near future.



COMMUNITY Fundraising

As part of their community involvement campaign, all Hudsons Coffee stores selected a local charity to support. The MS Society of Tasmania was chosen as one such lucky charity.

The Hudsons Coffee store and kart in the Launceston Airport donated 50 cents from every Caramel Cappuccino and Vanilla Latte they sold between May 23 and July 3. They raised \$177 for the MS Society of Tasmania. That's a lot of coffee!!

Thank you to the Hudsons Coffee store and kart at the Launceston Airport for their kind support. It is much appreciated!

Starring Staff Profile



Sue Anderson

Administration Coordinator

Date Joined Society: January 2009

Interests: Reading, dining with friends, walking on the beach and needlework

Favourite Food: Chocolate and Indian cuisine

Favourite Music: AC/DC, Metallica, classical, anything but Country

Favourite Book: Anything written by David Eddings or Agatha Christie

Background: Sue was born in Waikato on the North Island of New Zealand in a town called Ngaruawahia. After finishing high school, Sue's first job was as a Pharmacy assistant but her working history encompasses a range of administrative roles, primarily in providing support to managers and working with databases both in New Zealand and Tasmania.

Sue spent a year in Brisbane in 2001, returned to New Zealand and then moved to Tasmania in November of 2002 with her husband Gordon. Sue joined our team here at the MS Society in January 2009 as our Database Administrator. Since then her role has developed and she is now responsible for all of our Information Systems including IT.

In New Zealand, Sue has 2 sons, an awesome daughter-in-law and 2 precious grandsons, Zade and Quin. Sue and Gordon have settled in Primrose Sands after spending their first year in the state, living in New Norfolk. They share their home with Loui the Maltese Terrier Cocker Spaniel cross, whom I think runs the house!

Sue's many and varied skills include, talking to her computer and making us wonder if she is talking to us as we walk past her office, a great sense of humour and willingness to cause mayhem around birthdays, singing (well I think it could be called singing) when under stress and her patience in dealing with our IT issues and raffle planning. These all make her an especially valuable member of our team here at the Society.



LCS on their "Dress Red for MS" Day

MS Readathon and the Novel Challenge



Tasmania had around 700 kids pick up their books and read for a reason in the 32nd MS Readathon. With around 65 schools participating, to date we have raised almost \$30,000 in Tasmania.

The official money due date was August 31, but there is still time to return your sponsorship money to help people living with MS and collect your reading rewards as a thank you!

To complete the program simply:

- Log onto www.msreadathon.org.au and return payment with a credit card
- Or return the completion form (that was received via email) with payment of credit card, cheque or a money order
- Go into any NAB bank branch and pay over the counter. Participants will need to ring 1300 677 323 to get information about this option.
- Any receipt books issued should also be returned.

Launceston Christian School

The staff and students at Launceston Christian School are always great supporters of the MS Readathon. This year the school has taken it one step further and a group of teachers have entered a team in **The Novel Challenge**. LCS Reading Team are currently the highest fundraising team in Australia and team members Sonia Bowen and Kate Churcher are currently the highest individual fundraisers!

The school recently held a "Dress Red for MS" Day and had all the students spell out MS. A sincere thank you goes out to Launceston Christian School for their wonderful support of the MS Society of Tasmania.

READERS PROFILE: Clan McLeod

William, Kate and Emma McLeod participated in the MS Readathon this year as Clan McLeod. Nine year old William has participated for four years, whilst this is seven year old Kate's second year and five year old Emma's first year.

They are reading to help raise money for people living with MS and Emma gets the added bonus of lots of reading practice! Last year they managed to raise \$345 which is just wonderful!


Thank you William, Kate and Emma!



the novel challenge

The Novel Challenge, now in its second year, has so far managed to raise over \$60,000 nationally to date. In Tasmania we have many fantastic readers who are flicking through the pages to make a difference to people living with MS. There is still time to register or to sponsor a reader or team by going online to www.thenovelchallenge.org.au

A great big thank you to all of our wonderful readers who participated in the MS Readathon this year.

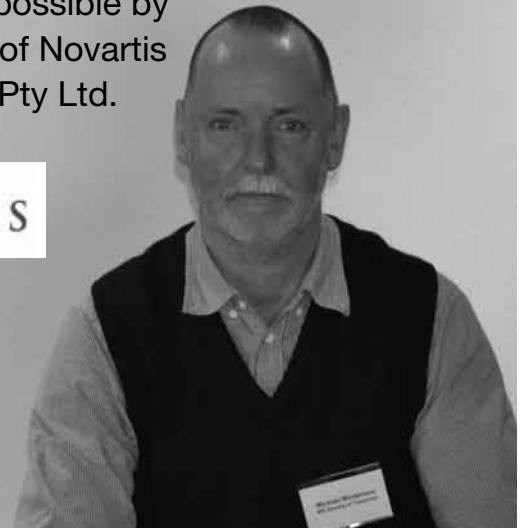


Multiple Sclerosis and Employment Forum

The Multiple Sclerosis and Employment Forum was held on June 1, 2011 at the Hotel Grand Chancellor in Hobart. This was made possible by the generous sponsorship of Novartis Pharmaceuticals Australia Pty Ltd.



MS Society of Tasmania staff Lynsey and Michael at the Forum.



The Forum was initiated in response to current research on the economic impact of Multiple Sclerosis in Australia, together with evidence from the Client Services team of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Tasmania, illustrating that many of the Society's clients require support to deal with employment issues. In addition, the national theme for 2011 National MS Awareness Week – 26th May to 5th June – was employment. The theme of the Forum was both relevant and timely.

The aim of the Multiple Sclerosis and Employment Forum was to raise awareness in the employment, health, community services and disability sectors of the ways in which a diagnosis of MS impacts on an individual's ability to maintain an active role in employment, and the ways in which an employer can maximize the opportunities for a person living with MS to continue to work. To this end, the Forum's target audience was drawn from organisations including government departments, disability services, employment services, healthcare services, major employers and allied health professionals.

A total of 40 people gathered in Hobart for the Forum. Minister Cassy O'Connor, Minister for Human Services, conducted the official opening, and the participants

...the Forum's target audience was drawn from organisations including government departments, disability services, employment services, healthcare services, major employers and allied health professionals.

then heard presentations by Dr Rex Simmons, Mr Stephen Jolly, Ms Robin Banks, Ms Roz Smart and Ms Alex Newton. In addition, a presentation by two clients of the MS Society and one employer gave personal insights into workplace experiences.

During the lunch break a Mini Expo provided the participants with information on the services offered by the Centrelink Financial Information Service, Manpower, the National Disability Coordination Office, the Anti-Discrimination

Commission, WISE Employment and the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Tasmania.

The Australian MS Longitudinal Study and the Economic Impact of MS

Dr Rex Simmons, Principal Research Fellow at Canberra Hospital, is the project manager for the Australian MS Longitudinal Study (AMSLS). Rex spoke about the processes, participation and projects of the AMSLS and the structure of their database. He explained the nature of the surveys that provide the information for the study and the type of information collected. Rex further presented on the AMSLS Economic Impact of MS Study that was conducted in 2003 and repeated in 2007-8.

Rex also discussed the National MS Employment

Survey organised by MS Research Australia and conducted in 2009 – 2010, the data from which is still being analysed. This survey looked at data relating to persons with MS in employment compared to the general population.

In a second short presentation, Rex also shared with the Forum some information from the research of Professor Andrew Palmer of the Menzies Research Institute of Tasmania and his colleagues. This information, entitled Prevalence and Costs of Multiple Sclerosis in Australia 2010, looked at the prevalence of MS in Australia and the associated economic costs.

MS and the Issues that Affect Employment

Mr Stephen Jolly spoke about the impact of MS on employment and on everyday life, and gave information about the Disability Employment Services, Employment Support Service delivered by MS Australia.

Stephen discussed the symptoms of MS and the ways in which these symptoms can impact on a person's everyday life and on employment. Stephen further discussed practical ways in which symptoms could be managed in the workplace to enable a person living with MS to remain in employment and to enjoy all the inherent benefits of doing so.

Discrimination in the Workplace

Anti-Discrimination Commissioner Ms Robin Banks spoke about the legislation governing Disability Discrimination and discussed the types of discrimination in the workplace, the grounds for applying anti-discrimination laws and the processes of discrimination complaints. Senior Training, Education and Development Officer, Ms Roz Smart, described her role and the training opportunities available in the area of workplace diversity and anti-discrimination.

Workplace Experiences

This part of the program featured three speakers – two clients of MS Tasmania who have been diagnosed with MS and who have continued in employment, and Kerri Rafferty, who is the Safety and Wellbeing Advisor for James Boag and Sons / Lion Nathan.

The two clients of MS Tasmania generously shared their experience of MS and described the ways in which it impacted on their lives and their ability to continue working. They further discussed the issues surrounding disclosure of their diagnosis and the support that has been provided by their respective employers.

Kerri Rafferty discussed the commitment of James Boag and Sons / Lion Nathan to provide support for employees, including a staff member who is living with MS. She described the nature of this support, which is designed in consultation with the employee. Kerri

explained that the approach is part of the company's Achievement Culture, of which wellbeing is a key element.

Future Directions

Ms Alex Newton, Program Manager for the Operational Support Team at WISE Employment, spoke about the role of WISE in supporting disadvantaged members of the community and providing assistance to job seekers and employers under the Australian Government's Disability Employment Services.

The feedback from the evaluation forms completed by the participants was overwhelmingly positive. Every speaker was very well received, with almost 100% of the responses ranking each presentation excellent, very good or good. Every respondent also indicated that they would recommend the Forum to others.

The written comments included:

- *Really informative day – very good speakers. Thanks for an enriching day*
- *Fantastic and diverse information. Thank you very much*
- *Good variety of speakers and content*
- *Great to have personal stories from MS clients and employer*

The Multiple Sclerosis and Employment Forum was a very successful day and it provided information that was current and relevant to a range of key stakeholders, who either directly or indirectly may be supporting Tasmanians with Multiple Sclerosis.

Cobber Neck Wraps



Cobber neck wraps are made of polyester and cotton and filled with poly-crystals. By simply placing the neck wrap in clean water for approximately 30 minutes, and allowing the crystals to expand, it produces an evaporative cooling system for the user when worn.

Wearing cool and dry against the skin, the wraps are environmentally friendly, re-useable for many years and come in a variety of patterns, colours and designs.

The MS Society sells the wraps for \$12 and with the warmer weather approaching these are a great way to keep cool for those who struggle with the heat.



AUSTRALIA
Giving life back

Head Office

Hobart

15 Princes Street
Sandy Bay TAS 7005
Tel: 03 6220 1111

Northern Regional Office

18/2 Innocent Street
Kings Meadows TAS 7250
Tel: 03 6343 1240

Freecall Statewide

1800 676 721

www.msaustralia.org.au/tas

Main North & North-West Support Groups

Enquiries: 6343 1240

Launceston Support Group

Meets the 2nd Thursday each month at the Branch Community Centre next door to the MS Society Office (opposite the bowling alley).

18/2 Innocent Street, Kings Meadows
Time: 11am to 1pm

Ulverstone Support Group

Meets the 4th Wednesday each month at the Ulverstone Surf Life Saving Club, Beach Road, Ulverstone (Lift access is available)

Time: 11am to 2pm

Circular Head Support Group

Meets the 1st Monday of each month at Circular Head Rural Health Services Inc 68 Emmett Street, Smithton

Time: 7.30pm

Contact Jenny on 6452 1594

Southern Support Groups

Enquiries: 6220 1111

Eastern Shore Support Group

Meets the 2nd Friday each month at Bellerive Yacht Club (entrance to function room off lower car park).

Time: 10.30 am to 12 noon

Glenorchy Support Group

Meets the last Friday bi-monthly at Glenorchy Community Health Centre, Meeting Room 3 – 1st Floor, Terry Street, Glenorchy.

Time: 10.30am – 12 noon

Note: Some days may change due to public holidays (please check your calendar).

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