

MARCH 2022

# MS + YOU



How your support is empowering MS research and people living with MS

## A big thank you – from Silas to you.



Your support is enabling more Peer Support Volunteers like Silas to bring people with MS together and connect during times of isolation.

Silas uses his personal experience of MS to give guidance, support and connection to other people living with MS, as an MS Peer Support Volunteer.

*“MS Peer Support is an amazing service that helps*

*people with MS feel a lot less alone, which was so important in 2021,”* he shares.

He knows people with MS continue to rely on the support provided by people like you.

*“From the bottom of my heart, thank you for supporting Multiple Sclerosis Limited. It really means so much to me and my family, and to so many people living with MS.”*



In 2021, support like yours meant that over

# 900

people with MS could participate in invaluable **Peer Support** sessions both virtually and in person, so people didn't have to face MS alone during a pandemic.

## Thank you from the CEO

You've made so much possible in 2021. And, thanks to you, we have much to look forward to in 2022.

With you by our side, we will be able to provide more support, more services for people with MS, and more funding for research, helping to improve all aspects of health and wellbeing for people with MS.

I hope you enjoy reading about the ways you've helped people with MS feel connected and well equipped to live their best life. On behalf of everyone who has felt the impacts of your generosity, **thank you**.

**Thank you for everything you do to empower the MS community to live well.**



**John Blewonski**  
CEO –  
Multiple Sclerosis Limited

In the past year more than

# 500

people were supported by the **MS Engagement Service** to achieve their personal health goals.



## Karyn is living well with MS thanks to the MS Client Engagement & Wellbeing Service



The MS Client Engagement & Wellbeing team empowers people like Karyn to live their best lives by helping them get the support they need through the NDIS.

Barely able to move and in tremendous pain all the time, Karyn was in desperate need of help from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). But she was too ill to apply for it by herself.

That's when MSL's Client Engagement & Wellbeing team stepped in. With your support, they helped her navigate the complex application process and make a new NDIS plan.

It completely changed Karyn's life. With the insurance, she was able to start using a freedom wheelchair. She told us:

*"I absolutely love, love, love the chair! I can go for walks, go to the shops and generally enjoy the fresh air and way more freedoms than I've had for two years!"*

She also received a lift bed:

*"This has helped immensely, preventing nightly choking fits. I am so happy to have a better night's sleep. I am beyond grateful for the assistive aids I now have to make my life better."*

**Thank you for ensuring people like Karyn can get the support they desperately need to live well with MS.**



“Because of you, people with MS like me can get the support we need, when we need it.” – Lyndie

## MS Connect continues to provide essential support for people like Lyndie

For Lyndie and others like her, MS Connect is a lifeline – a gateway to the vital services that MSL provides.

Lyndie was beyond grateful she could turn to the MS Connect phone line for support after she was diagnosed with MS in 2020.

*“Having someone who we can call when concerned about MS-related issues is an amazing service. The staff at MS Connect are gems who put a little bit of sparkle in people’s lives, including my own.”*



*“Thank you so much for giving generously to support those like me who are on the same journey.”*

**MS Connect is 100% funded by your generous donations. Thank you for ensuring services like MS Connect are available for people like Lyndie.**



Your philanthropic support meant that over **23,000** people like Lyndie were able to get the support they needed via **MS Connect** in 2021.



## As an MS Nurse, Bridie’s delivering vital specialist support every day

Throughout the pandemic, MS Nurse Advisors like Bridie continued to provide an accessible and responsive service to the MS community when it was needed the most.

*“My role here at Multiple Sclerosis Limited is Nurse Advisor. As a registered nurse, I provide specialised clinical support for people living with MS and their families.*

*That support can be a lot of different things, including providing evidence-based advice to help people with MS manage their symptoms, and empower them to make decisions about their healthcare.*

*A large part of my role is also offering emotional support to my clients. The pandemic of course brought unique fears to the MS community - fear of contracting COVID with MS, fear of immunosuppression, social isolation increasing.*

*More of my clients missed or rescheduled medical appointments due to fear of contracting COVID.*

*My team’s understanding of MS and MS treatments have helped us to reassure our clients, and we’ve been able to remain accessible and on hand to deliver expert advice in an incredibly challenging time.*

***Everything I do is made possible by people who donate to Multiple Sclerosis Limited. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to continue empowering the MS community to live well.”***

**– Bridie, MS Nurse Advisor**



## \$6.9 million for new MS research projects in MS Australia's 2022 grant round

With your help, 26 new projects, ranging from one-year studies to major three-year projects, have been awarded funding.

With help from people like you, Multiple Sclerosis Limited and the other state MS

member organisations are supporting MS Australia to fund a range of research projects, including studies into causes and prevention, better treatments and cures via repair and regeneration of cells.

The new research, which commenced in January 2022, include three new project grants, co-funded by MSL, that specifically address the repair and regeneration of nerves, **a critical step towards treating progressive forms of MS.**

The \$6.9 million awarded in grants to researchers this year is MS Australia's largest ever annual grant funding commitment. It's an outstanding achievement in the 50th year since the formation of the national organisation, to drive awareness, research and support for people living with MS. **And it's your support that is making it possible.**



In 2021, over **\$270K** was awarded to **12** new incubator grants, providing seed funding to new, innovative research ideas.

## \$25,000 Incubator grant awarded to Dr Jun Yan from the University of Queensland

Dr Jun Yan's exciting research could lead to new, personalised treatments for MS.

The generation of new ideas in MS research is absolutely critical to finding better treatments and a cure. Your support is making innovation in MS research possible by helping to provide Incubator Grants to MS researchers like Dr Jun Yan.

Dr Yan's research aims to increase our understanding of the central nervous system and the brain of people with MS, which is important in creating personalised treatment plans for people with MS.



Dr Jun Yan

*"Due to the difficulty of accessing the brain, MS researchers cannot study live brain tissue in research.*

*Our project overcomes this difficulty by using the brain cells derived from individual somatic cells – similar to living tissue. Our project can increase our understanding of MS defects in the brain, and can help design personalised treatments for MS patients."*

**Thank you for making innovations in MS research like this possible through your visionary support. Your commitment is helping to make a better future for people with MS.**



## Research holds the key to a better future

Associate Professor Anthony Don is leading an exciting new research project into remyelination. Ongoing research like his is bringing a cure for MS closer every day.

The only way to find a cure for MS is through research. Right here in Australia, talented scientists are leading ground-breaking research projects that are searching for new and better ways to treat MS.

Associate Professor Don is one of them. With help from supporters like you, he has been awarded a grant to fund ongoing research that could have a huge impact on the lives of people with MS for generations to come.

Associate Professor Don is studying the way the immune system of people with MS attacks the coating of nerves – known as myelin sheaths – and creates the symptoms of MS. He's working to discover if there is a way of encouraging the body to repair those myelin sheaths – a process called **remyelination**.

There are currently no therapies that stimulate remyelination, but Associate Professor Don is investigating whether a naturally occurring molecule called S1P can help protect and repair myelin. If that's the case, it could open the way to the development of drugs that mimic the actions of SP1 – and **bring us closer than ever to finding a cure for MS.**

*“I will be able to use this knowledge in designing drugs that are intended specifically to stimulate myelin repair in MS,”* says Associate Professor Don.

**These new drugs could reverse the symptoms of MS and make a better future for people living with the disease.**

Thanks to the investment of people like you, a total of **60** investigator-led projects received continued funding in 2021.





## MS research breakthroughs will be Jenny's legacy

Jenny never lets her MS stop her. Now, with a gift in her Will, she's helping stop MS.

Jenny has been living with MS for over 30 years, but she's never let it stop her doing what she wants to do.

She's passionate about helping others with MS, and she's doing everything she can to help fund essential research. As she explains, *"eventually, that's where a cure will be found."*

**It's exactly why she's made the very generous decision to include a gift to power MS research in her Will.**

By including a gift in her Will, Jenny is making sure that ground-breaking research continues long after she's gone. Jenny said the process was *"simple."* All it took was a quick call to her solicitor, but her generous decision could change the future for people with MS forever.

Now Jenny is happy to know that she'll be making a better world for people with MS for generations to come.

---

If you would like to know more about how you could leave a gift in your Will to MSL, please reach out to **Laura Henschke on 1800 443 867** or **[Laura.Henschke@ms.org.au](mailto:Laura.Henschke@ms.org.au)**.

---

## Kids like Declan are helping to improve the future for people with MS

Every August, the MS Readathon inspires kids just like Declan to read and raise vital funds for Australians with MS.

In 2020, with your help, we celebrated the 42nd year of the Readathon, with 42,000 eager kids registering to get involved. Declan Evans was just one of them. Declan participates in the Readathon every year, motivated to support his Uncle Andrew who has MS:

*"My favourite thing about taking part in the MS Readathon is reading and at the same time raising money for people with MS, like my Uncle Andrew."*



---

In 2020, fantastic kids like Declan helped the **MS Readathon** raise **\$3.2 million** to help people living with MS.  
**Thank you, Declan!**

---

# Community: Building bridges to connect with each other

Our iconic fundraising events bring people together in solidarity and positivity, inspiring the community to connect and have fun while helping people with MS face their challenges and retain their dreams.



Over four incredible weeks in October thousands of people took up our virtual cycling challenge and rode over 300,000km to raise funds to support people with MS.



The MS Walk Run + Roll celebrates the diversity of the MS community, inspiring people of all ages and abilities to come together to either walk, run or roll to raise funds to support critical MS services.



The connection participants have to MS as a cause shows the power that these events have to unite the community. Funds raised contribute to the MS Go for Gold Scholarships, Financial Assistance Programs and services that directly benefit people living with multiple sclerosis.

To find out more and get involved, email our team at [events@ms.org.au](mailto:events@ms.org.au) or call 1300 733 690.



**MS Gong Ride**  
1713 participants  
raised **\$781,534**



**MS Walk Run + Roll**  
7071 participants  
raised **\$910,549**



**MS Mega Challenge**  
1,836 participants  
raised **\$573,959**

## More people like Kristina can get specialised support in their toughest times

Kristina didn't know how to get the support she needed. But, thanks to you, the Client Engagement & Wellbeing team were there to help her.

Kristina's life was turned upside down in 2020 when MS left her unable to walk and in constant pain.

She needed help badly. But she was overwhelmed by fatigue and didn't even have the energy to ask for an NDIS assessment. "It felt like a mountain that I had to climb," she recalls.

That changed when she met Vanessa from MSL's Client

Engagement & Wellbeing team. An expert in both MS and navigating the NDIS, Vanessa helped Kristina get the support she urgently needed.

Kristina now has access to life-changing supports like regular physiotherapy, an Occupational Therapist and a cleaner and gardener.

It's your generosity that makes this kind of support possible for hundreds of people with MS like Kristina.

*"Your kindness has made such a difference to my life. Thank you so much."*

If you'd like to continue helping people with MS like Kristina get the support they need, please visit [ms.org.au/Impact](https://ms.org.au/Impact).



"My life is so much better thanks to people like you. Thank you." – Kristina



**Thank you for driving vital MS research forward  
and empowering the MS community to live well.**



ms.org.au • 1800 287 367