



Putting our best foot forward

MS Annual Report 2017







## Contents

Board of Directors/Corporate Governance	2
Chair's report	3
CEO's report	4
Executive team/special thanks	5

### **Our services**

Categories of support infographic	6
Everyday tips & tricks	7
Referral, advice & info	8
Employment support	9
Individual assessment	10
Symptom management	11
Living arrangements	12
NDIS & My Aged Care	13
Emotional support	14
Connection with others	15
Wellbeing support	16
Education	17
Research	18

### **Our advocacy**

MS Australia	19
--------------	----

### **Our advisory bodies**

MS Advisory Councils of Victoria, NSW and Tasmania, and ACT Southern NSW Regional Advisory Board	20
---	----

### **Our people**

MS team and volunteers	21
------------------------	----

### **Our fundraising**

Building a secure future	22
The year in fundraising	23

### **Our books**

Concise financials	24
--------------------	----

<b>Contact us</b>	32
-------------------	----

**COVER ARTWORK:**  
*Mind your Step*  
acrylic on canvas  
by Meg McIntyre

# The Board of Directors



**From left:** Denise Cosgrove, Desmond Graham, Christina Gillies, Garry R Whatley (Deputy Chair), William Peter Day (Chair), Ron Brent, Karen Hayes AM, Sophie Langshaw, Ian Pennell AM.

**Not pictured:** Sharlene Brown, Don Ferguson, Robert McEniry, Scott McCorkell, Ian Gordon AO (leave of absence).

## Our Corporate Governance Statement

- sets out the principles, policies and procedures that the Board adopts to ensure that our long-term health and prosperity are maintained for the benefit of Australians affected by multiple sclerosis
  - identifies the roles and responsibilities of the Board and Executive in setting our strategy and direction, and in managing and controlling the organisation.
- Our full Corporate Governance Statement can be viewed at [www.ms.org.au](http://www.ms.org.au)

# New steps, constant vision



We welcome Tasmania to our organisation, along with new directors Des Graham and Sharlene Brown, and we also extend our welcome to Ron Brent as alternate Director for Major General (retired) Ian Gordon.

The stories of people living with multiple sclerosis underscore our commitment to supporting all people affected by the condition – whether or not they are covered by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The 2016/17 financial year was the first year of transition through which MS' block funding commenced phase-out and the generation of new services revenue commenced. We raise funds to deliver our Mission Services – MS Connect, MS Advisor, MS Peer Support, MS Education and volunteering – and we have to strive harder for every fundraising dollar.

In July 2016 we foresaw a financial operating deficit for the year ahead, and this provoked discussion around planned staff reductions aligned with funding agreements, even though the NDIS rollout was eventually slower than expected. We have been heavily involved in discussions with State Governments and the Federal Government, in collaboration with other neurological agencies, to deliver stronger presence and support from the onset of multiple sclerosis, for people over the age of 65, plus a more holistic approach to health and disability.

The NDIS is the most significant policy development for the disability sector; however, it has led to gaps and we need to direct our focus and every dollar we can to preserve services into the future for people not covered by the Scheme.

Our Support Coordination service aims to ensure the best NDIS packages to facilitate better life outcomes for people living with neurological conditions.

Our ambition is to create centres of MS excellence that will deliver services in the cities and regional territories we support – ACT, NSW, Tasmania and Victoria. We are striving to free up more of our income to enhance and preserve our capacity to deliver MS Mission Services forever.

While we acknowledge the challenges of regional differences and individual preferences in attitudes to new technologies, we recognise the great opportunity presented by advancing technology. We have continued our investment to deliver internal efficiencies and effectiveness, with tools in the hands of our frontline team to enable them to provide better, faster and more accessible services.

We have embraced innovative solutions such as webinars and live chat to broaden people's access to our services and enhance their experience of them.

The emerging NDIS environment demands that service providers be responsible for their own sustainability. Fundraising supports the core of our Mission Services offerings, and the significant reduction in block funding revenue due to the introduction of NDIS will not be offset by new services revenue growth from the NDIS.

This imposes an element of commerciality that is new to the organisation, our staff and clients. However, MS is above all else a service organisation. Our clients come to us for one reason: to receive a high-quality service. And our employees and volunteers come to us to provide a high-quality service for people affected by multiple sclerosis.

Our investment in our team is an investment in our most important resource for delivering the best possible services to people affected by multiple sclerosis.

I extend my thanks to my fellow MS Board members, CEO Robyn Hunter and GM Service Innovation Sandra Walker, our staff, dedicated volunteers and fundraisers for your commitment. Without you all, we couldn't do what we do.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'W. Peter Day'.

**W. Peter Day**  
Chair



# Success through our core values



## Special thanks

I'd like to acknowledge the excellent contribution of Catherine Saint, GM HR; Jack Hanson, GM Commercial Development; and Dyranda Hortle, GM Strategic Marketing and Sales, who have moved on during 2016-17. In June we welcomed Kim Farrugia, Executive Officer; Ben Holgate, GM Strategic Fundraising; and appointed Ian Hobbs as Chief Financial Officer to complement the existing Executive team.

It's with great pleasure that we report to you our key achievements and performance over the past 12 months. Thanks to the incredible energy, commitment and continued efforts of everyone at MS, we received a 100% Accreditation rating from the Department of Health and Human Service Standards for delivering services of exceptional quality.

We are committed to providing exceptional service to bring the MS Service Promise and our organisational values to life. We hold dear, and without compromise, Respect, Care, Commitment and Leadership – and this Annual Report provides an insightful story of the year in numbers, as well as demonstrating our commitment to our values and purpose through stories. It's also a reflection and celebration of our success in ensuring no one faces MS alone.

The Annual Report reviews how we have performed in core areas that support our strategic priorities. So much change is happening in our sector, and there is still much work to be done. We are focused on determining the direction the organisation needs to take, and establishing a strategic mindset – which is a different approach to traditional strategic planning and operational details. In this dynamic and changing environment, we are putting systems in place to enable us to be more agile and adapt quickly to change.

We are committed to meeting the needs of people affected by multiple sclerosis in a flexible, relevant and responsive way, and we are focusing on the sustainability of our organisation in the emerging NDIS landscape, building our capacity to weather unprecedented changes and challenges and to permanently provide our core services.

We have spent a total of \$19.9 million on services. Our information and support line MS Connect took more than 18,000 calls from clients, carers and health professionals – double the volume from 2012-2013. This core service is funded almost entirely from fundraising and events. It's inspiring that each year hundreds of people rally family members, friends and colleagues to raise funds. This year's fundraising performance raised a total of \$14.8m, net \$5.4m, and included significant expenditure relating to investment in new fundraising initiatives.

We are beginning to realise the benefits of implementing a single ICT platform for our services and fundraising operations, and are nearing completion of the ICT systems development program.

The MS brand remains highly visible, credible and respected. We have strengthened the marketing of our services to underpin building our engagement with clients, carers and neurologists to better understand and use our services, and we strive to communicate where the money goes through sharing real experiences.

The overall performance in 2016-2017 was outstanding and we wish to reassure our clients, donors, trustees, fundraisers and the MS community that we are an effective and leading organisation in the not-for-profit community, and we will remain true to our core purpose to improve the lives of people affected by multiple sclerosis, who inspire us each and every day.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all those who have contributed, particularly to my colleagues – our employees, our volunteers and MS Ambassadors, our fundraisers and our event participants. Without their unstinting efforts to provide our Service Promise to you, we wouldn't be able to push the boundaries and achieve the positive outcomes we do for people affected by multiple sclerosis.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge people affected by multiple sclerosis and their families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robyn Hunter'.

**Robyn Hunter**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Executive Team



**Robyn Hunter**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Sandra Walker**  
General Manager,  
Service Innovation



**Ian Hobbs**  
Chief Financial Officer,  
Commercial Development



**Ben Holgate**  
General Manager,  
Strategic Fundraising

## Special thanks

### In particular, we would like to acknowledge:

#### The Australian Government:

- National Disability Insurance Agency
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Health

#### The Australian Capital Territory Government:

- Disability ACT

#### The New South Wales Government:

- Department of Family and Community Services – Ageing, Disability and Home Care
- NSW Health
  - Western Sydney Local Health District
  - Went West Primary Health Network

#### The Victorian Government:

- Department of Health and Human Services

#### The Tasmanian Government

- Department of Health and Human Services

#### Local Government:

##### New South Wales

- City of Parramatta
- Cumberland Council

##### Tasmania

- Central Highlands Council
- Circular Head Council
- Kingborough Council
- Launceston City Council

##### Victoria

- Banyule City Council
- Brimbank City Council
- City of Casey
- City of Whitehorse
- Hobsons Bay City Council
- Maroondah City Council

### Our Patrons:

- Tim Ferguson
- Sarah Ryan OAM
- Carol Cooke AM
- Zachary Merrett
- His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) Governor of New South Wales
- Mrs Linda Hurley

### Our Donors:

**We thank all of our donors and supporters who contributed towards our services this year. A special thank you goes to our major donors whose generosity we would like to acknowledge:**

- Mr Robert Albert
- Mr Joseph and Mrs Veronika Butta
- Mrs Grimsdale
- William Hayward
- Mr R Kaiser
- Mr Rod Miller
- Greg and Renee Pynt
- Mr Barry K Timbrell
- Mrs Robin Yabsley

### Trusts and Foundations:

**We also acknowledge and thank the following major grant funders for their valuable contributions:**

- Aged Persons Welfare Foundation
- Bell Charitable Fund.
- Cabra-vale Diggers
- DOOLEYS, Lidcombe
- Goodman Foundation
- Hugh D T Williamson Foundation
- Muffin Foundation
- Perpetual Foundation
- Profield Foundation
- The Harry Secomb Foundation
- The Raymond E Purves Foundation

### Our event partners/supporters:

- Bunnings Warehouse
- BT
- Chiswick Plumbing
- City of Melbourne
- City of Sydney
- Cycling NSW
- Destination Wollongong
- Flemington Racecourse
- Great Australian Poker Run
- Hillbrick Bicycles
- Legends & Heroes Memorabilia
- Lend Lease
- Monjon Security
- New South Wales Institute of Sport –Cycling Program
- NSW Police
- OSCARS Hotel Group
- Phill Bates
- RACV (Corporate Property Services)
- Rotary
- Subaru
- Transport for NSW
- VicRoads
- Weblease

### Our media partners/supporters:

- OMD media agency
- oOH! Outdoor Media
- WhiteGrey
- Network Ten
- SBS
- Australian Traffic Network
- ABC News 24
- Free PR
- i98 Radio

# OUR SERVICES

## Same support, new approach

We believe wholeheartedly in the services and supports we offer people affected by multiple sclerosis, and actively seek to ensure every member of the MS community knows exactly how we can help them live well and achieve their goals – regardless of where they're at on their journey.

This can change daily, with the symptoms and severity of multiple sclerosis different for everyone. But we're here to make sure no one has to face MS alone, with support every step of the way.

As such, we consulted with the MS community about what THEY expect from us in terms of services, and developed a new infographic breaking down our avenues of support in an easier-to-understand way.

It's an approach we believe will make it easier for people affected by multiple sclerosis to understand and engage in the full suite of services and support we offer, based on their needs. We're very proud of it.

Everyone registered with MS will soon receive this information on a fridge magnet, and we've broken down the following pages in this Annual Report into the service categories represented in it.



# OUR SERVICES

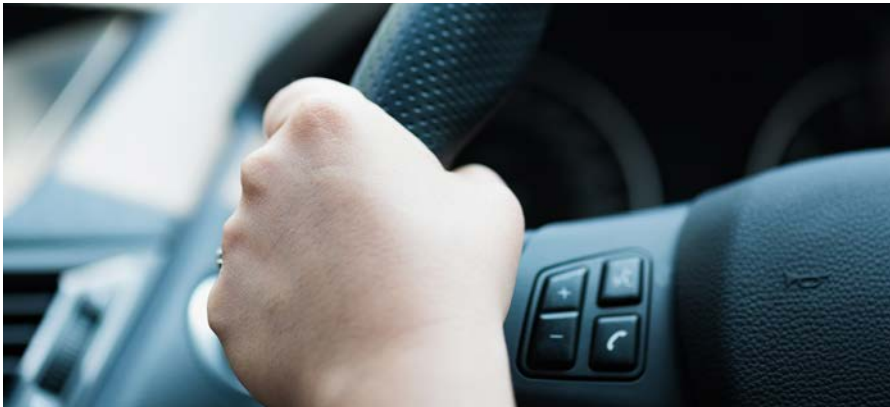
## Everyday tips & tricks

Multiple sclerosis can impact a person's everyday life in many ways, and sometimes all that's needed is step-by-step tips and tricks. We're here to provide people living with multiple sclerosis with practical, real-world advice about things such as driving, finances, benefits and entitlements, travel, eligibility for services, supporting carers, legal issues, telling their loved ones about their diagnosis and much more.

### How do we provide this?

- MS Connect
- MS Advisor
- MS Education webinars and face-to-face programs
- MS Employment Support Service
- MS Peer Support
- MS NDIS Services
- Publications, resources and information sheets, [ms.org.au](http://ms.org.au)
- Online tools (Get your ACT together, Eat Well Live Well, Find Local Services)

### Featured service: MS Education – webinar



Right from the time of diagnosis, living with multiple sclerosis is a learning experience – and with the unpredictability of symptoms and related issues, it's often a case of learning as you go.

Terri, 47, was diagnosed in October 2014 and hadn't thought much about multiple sclerosis in relation to driving – until an article in our *Intouch* eNewsletter alerted her to the legal requirement that people notify their state road authority of their diagnosis.

We'd advertised a Driving and Multiple Sclerosis webinar, hosted by occupational therapist and qualified driver assessor Mary-Ann Calabrese. Terri saw this as the perfect opportunity to bank some practical knowledge about the impacts her condition might have on her driving, and the ways to ensure she could continue to do so safely.

"I didn't know about the driving requirement until then, and just wanted to know more information about that, as it relates to me," Terri says. "I don't have any level of impairment at the moment, but I wanted to know what could potentially happen should I develop any level of impairment."

"Hearing from the OT what steps I might go through was reassuring – I'd rather know up front what to expect than get a surprise later. And it was also reassuring that I wouldn't instantly lose my ability to drive, and that there's assessment and testing to ensure I'll be safe, as will the public."

Terri was one of 37 people who tuned in to the webinar that day, and highlights just one way in which we help to provide everyday tips and tricks for the MS community that can make a tangible difference in their lives.

"It was really good to get some detail and clarity about the subject from an expert," she says.

### 2016-2017 in numbers

**18,276**  
inbound  
contacts to  
MS Connect

**337**  
contacts  
with MS Social  
Work Advisor

**1695**  
people  
attended 79  
MS Education  
programs

**67**  
recorded  
webinars  
hosted at  
[ms.org.au](http://ms.org.au)

**177**  
MS Peer Support  
volunteers ran 52 MS  
groups across NSW,  
ACT, VIC and TAS



# OUR SERVICES

## Referral, advice & info

Navigating the disability, health and aged-care sectors can be confusing and overwhelming. We're here to make it as simple as possible for people living with multiple sclerosis to find the right support, by connecting them into the right service. Sometimes that will be one of our MS services and sometimes it will be a service in their local community. We are also here to provide the most up-to-date advice and information on all things relating to multiple sclerosis, and we do this through a variety of channels: face-to-face and by phone, live webchat, Skype and FaceTime, and email.

### How do we provide this?

- MS Connect
- MS Advisor – nursing, continence and social work
- MS NDIS Services
- MS Education webinars and face-to-face programs
- Health professional programs
- MS Employment Support Service
- MS Respite
- MS Residential
- Carer and family information
- Publications, resources and information sheets, [ms.org.au](http://ms.org.au)
- Online tools (My NDIS Filter, Get your ACT together, Eat Well Live Well)

### Featured service: MS Connect



Our MS Connect service is the gateway to living well with multiple sclerosis, regardless of what kind of symptoms people are experiencing or how the condition is affecting their lives. We take calls, emails and web-based live chats from people living with multiple sclerosis, their carers, family and friends, as well as health professionals seeking the best information on how to advise their clients.

And MS Connect's reach isn't limited to ACT, NSW, Tasmania and Victoria – we even help people as far away as Europe.

Last year MS Connect received an email from Mr and Mrs Smith, whose daughter, April, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis while travelling in Italy.

April had had a catastrophic relapse and was in a hospital where no one spoke English. Both she and her parents, who quickly booked a flight from Melbourne to Italy, were at a loss as to what they could do.

MS Connect located and forwarded them contact details for English-speaking neurologists and hospitals in the local area, plus details on neurologists and specialist MS clinics for when April arrived back in Melbourne. Mr and Mrs Smith were also provided with information on multiple sclerosis, as they had little knowledge of the disease.

"We went to Italy feeling educated and empowered to understand what multiple sclerosis is, what care our daughter would need, and how we could access supports both overseas and back in Australia," says Mrs Smith.

"The information and support we received through MS Connect was absolutely invaluable, and we couldn't be more thankful."

Soon after April arrived back in Melbourne, she contacted MS to register herself and to begin her education into how to live well with multiple sclerosis. We look forward to walking with her on this journey for many years to come.

### 2016-2017 in numbers

**8716**

connections  
made by MS Connect  
with people living with  
multiple sclerosis

**1314**

connections  
made by MS Connect  
with carers, family  
members and  
friends

**1537**

people  
supported by  
MS Advisor

**30**

MS Education  
programs held  
for health  
professionals

**32**

NDIS pre-planning  
workshops held across  
NSW, Victoria and  
Tasmania

# OUR SERVICES

## Employment Support

Working and participating in the community are hugely important activities. If people find their multiple sclerosis symptoms are making working difficult, we're here to help them stay in their current job for as long as possible – or find the right job for them.

### How do we provide this?

- MS Employment Support Service
- MS Peer Support for workers  
(face-to-face and telegroup)

### Featured service: MS Employment Support Service



Working can be difficult for people living with multiple sclerosis, but the benefits can include helping to maintain financial independence, a better sense of self-worth and social inclusion. Just ask Sharryn.

She's just one of the many success stories of our MS Employment Support Service, which assesses people and then helps to find ways to support them achieve balance between working and living with multiple sclerosis.

Sharryn works in a call centre four days a week. When she was referred to the MS Employment Support Service, she struggled with back and neck pain; fatigue was impacting on her ability to concentrate, and reduced mobility made getting around the office difficult – especially getting to the bathroom on time.

"The program has been great," Sharryn says. "I've had fantastic support and I can contact the MS Employment Support Service whenever I have a problem.

"I used to experience terrible back and neck pain and the MS Employment Support Service has assisted with funding an ergonomic desk chair, which provides me with good support – and I'm no longer in pain at work."

As well as meeting regularly to help monitor and manage her symptoms, Sharryn's MS Employment Consultant supported her through an episode of depression, referred her to the MS Urology Clinic to help manage difficulties, assisted her to access an exercise program and physiotherapy for maintaining mobility, and provided information about home and car modifications to prevent falls and make commuting easier.

It's a holistic approach that works, and it's helped Sharryn enjoy perhaps the biggest employment benefit of all: "Continuing to be employed takes my mind off multiple sclerosis," she says.

The MS Employment Support Service is fully government-funded in Victoria and NSW, with no out-of-pocket expenses for participants – and we're currently working on rolling the program out across Australia.

### 2016-2017 in numbers

**\$255,424**

reimbursed for  
employment equipment  
for people living with  
multiple sclerosis

**42,527**

personal contacts  
made by  
MS Employment  
Support Service  
team

**5-star**

Department  
of Social Services rating  
for MS Employment  
Support Service

**466**

people assisted  
by MS Employment  
Support Service  
team

**95**

people referred  
for phone-based  
MS Peer  
Support



# OUR SERVICES

## Individual assessment

We have more than 60 years' insight and experience into living well with multiple sclerosis, and we understand that no two days and no two people are the same. We assess people's individual needs and how their symptoms are affecting their everyday life, and then make practical recommendations that will support them and their family.

### How do we provide this?

- MS Connect
- MS Advisor – nursing, continence and social work
- MS Employment Support Service
- MS NDIS Services
- MS Care
- MS Outreach program
- MS Respite
- MS Residential
- Carer and family information
- Publications, resources and information sheets, [ms.org.au](http://ms.org.au)
- Online tools (My NDIS Filter, Get your ACT together, Eat Well Live Well)

### Featured service: NDIS Services, physiotherapy assessment

Try as the National Disability Insurance Agency might, its staff simply cannot be experts in the challenges presented by every disability. With multiple sclerosis especially, which is so varied and unpredictable, it's crucial that anyone applying to participate in the NDIS prepares as much documentation as possible to demonstrate their need for supports and services.

As Anna discovered, the expertise of our specialists can be the difference between being rejected or accepted.

Anna, 57, was diagnosed in 2000 but had experienced multiple sclerosis-related symptoms since she was in her early 20s. Over the past couple of years she'd been having more and more falls, and as a result had become quite sedentary. When the NDIS rolled out into her area in NSW, she saw it as the perfect opportunity to fund some exercise equipment for her home and get some direction in helping manage her declining functions.

The NDIA disagreed, knocking back her application.

"They explained that from the information provided, I 'did not meet the disability requirements outlined in section 24 of the NDIS Act,'" Anna says. "From their letter, I understood that my neurologist didn't write enough in explanation of my disability."

Anna came to MS for help in challenging the NDIA's decision – specifically one of our physiotherapists, Dr Phu Hoang, who assessed her,



wrote a report on her symptoms and challenges, and recommended supports and interventions that would help her live better. These included a walking frame, a recumbent stationary bike at home, and group sessions with an exercise physiologist.

Anna included Dr Phu's report and a letter from her GP in her application for a review.

"Those were enough evidence of disability," Anna says. "I gained access to NDIS!"

There are many people like Anna who need this additional support, and we understand and embrace how important it is to investigate everyone's individual situation and circumstances.

### 2016-2017 in numbers

**1121**

referrals made to  
MS Nurse Advisor

**79**

referrals made  
to MS Continence  
Advisor

**1184**

therapy  
assessment  
referrals made to  
MS Care

**1775**

people provided with  
Case Management  
support in NSW, Victoria  
and Tasmania

**250**

MS Urology Clinic  
appointments

# OUR SERVICES

## Symptom management

Multiple sclerosis is a progressive neurological disease whose symptoms affect everyone differently. As the experts in multiple sclerosis, we understand how symptoms can impact on people and their loved ones in a variety of ways. Treating and managing symptoms comes down to knowing all the options and being able to decide on the best choices possible. There are a wide range of treatments, strategies and lifestyle choices that can help – and we're here to help people explore them all.

### How do we provide this?

- MS Connect
- MS Advisor – nursing, continence and social work
- MS Education
- MS Employment
- MS Peer Support
- MS NDIS services
- Publications, resources and information sheets, [ms.org.au](http://ms.org.au)
- Online tools (My NDIS Filter, Get your ACT together, Eat Well Live Well)
- Seeing MS
- MS Outreach program
- MS Ambassadors

### Featured service: MS Advisor, continence



About 80 per cent of people living with multiple sclerosis experience continence issues at some point in their lives – and when they arise, their impact can be more profound than mere inconvenience.

Problems develop when multiple sclerosis blocks or delays the transmission of nerve signals in areas of the central nervous system that control the bladder and bowel.

But evidence-based treatments and strategies can make a world of difference, and through the expertise of our MS Advisor service, people living with multiple sclerosis can discuss their issues and receive advice and referrals for specialist assessments confidentially.

Jackie, 36, reached out to MS when her continence issues had become too disruptive to ignore.

"My first symptom was trouble walking," says Jackie, who was diagnosed with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis four years ago. "I also have trouble with heat intolerance and balance, but the incontinence was really starting to affect my everyday life.

"It stopped me doing practically everything. I had to stop working, I couldn't go and do the groceries, even hanging out with my friends was difficult.

"I completely lost my sense of self-confidence. It made me feel very frustrated."

From an initial assessment, the MS Continence Advisor arranged specialist referrals and provided Jackie with a range of management strategies, from products and medication to lifestyle and diet.

"She got me onto a urologist and helped me with continence products and strategies," Jackie says.

"The MS Continence Advisor also looked at my issues from lots of different angles, not just urology. Eventually I tried Botox and self-catheterisation.

"I can't explain how much this has changed my life. I have my confidence back and a sense of control. I can hang out with my friends again, I don't have to carry pullup pants – and I have the confidence to wear normal knickers again!"

### 2016-2017 in numbers

**12,332**

phone calls made  
by MS Connect

**1121**

referrals to  
MS Nurse Advisor

**79**

assessment referrals  
to MS Continence  
Advisor

**39**

symptom-specific  
publications and  
recorded webinars  
hosted at  
[ms.org.au](http://ms.org.au)

**2**

symptoms-based  
masterclasses  
for Health  
Professionals



# OUR SERVICES

## Living arrangements

Feeling confident and independent in your own home is vital for anyone's wellbeing. We can help foster this wellbeing for people affected by multiple sclerosis in a number of ways, such as ensuring their home meets their needs, giving them a break from their own home or caring commitments, or finding them a home that's right for them and helping them move in.

### How do we provide this?

- MS Social Work Advisor
- MS NDIS services
- MS Residential
- MS Respite
- MS Education
- Flexirest
- Gift of Time
- Publications, resources and information sheets, [ms.org.au](http://ms.org.au)

### Featured service: MS Residential and the NDIS



Life has often been unkind to David. After losing his father and brother at an early age, he began to enjoy life again living with his mother and grandmother on their much-loved property, three house blocks in Eltham, Victoria. As a young adult he even built his own house on one of the blocks, where he continued to live alongside his family and helped care for his grandmother.

Then disaster struck again. He lost his mum and grandmother, leaving him with no family – and to make matters worse, he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

Unable to live on his own, David moved in to supported accommodation at MS Watsonia. Although he is a quiet man, he quickly made friends with fellow residents and enjoyed spending time in the local community with them. But as time went on and David lost several of those friends, he became more withdrawn and anxious, spending most of his time in the solitude of his room.

When he did agree to go on outings with staff, funding meant it was often with other residents, which David found overwhelming and stressful. Stress can trigger his epilepsy, so this led to him avoiding almost all planned outings and becoming more isolated.

Then the NDIS came along. We helped ensure David's funding would be individual, and after a couple of false starts with one-on-one support workers we found Mika, who has let David take the lead on how he would like to spend his time and work towards meeting the goals set in his NDIS plan. These goals include going back to Eltham to see his family property, stopping in at his old haunts and visiting his family at the cemetery. David is slowly gaining confidence.

"Mika's a lovely lady," David says. "I really look forward to her visits. I can talk to her in a relaxed way and she doesn't push me to go out if I'm not feeling up to it."

For David, the NDIS has made a world of difference and given him a pathway back to enjoying time in the community. We're proud to have been involved.

### 2016-2017 in numbers

**\$196,912**

distributed by Financial Assistance Program, with 91 requests fully funded

**27**

permanent residents across three sites: Lidcombe, Watsonia and Williamstown

**16**

of our 27 permanent residents have transitioned to NDIS plans

**\$94,888**

distributed for Gift of Time

**26,175**

hours of respite provided to 243 clients at our respite facilities in Watsonia and Lidcombe

# OUR SERVICES

## NDIS & My Aged Care

The National Disability Insurance Scheme and My Aged Care are two major changes to how people in the community access support. The NDIS supports people under the age of 65, while My Aged Care is geared towards supporting people over 65 live well. We're big believers in these social reforms, and we're here to make sure the community understands what they involve, how people living with multiple sclerosis can benefit – and also to help them prepare for and navigate these schemes.

### How do we provide this?

- MS NDIS services
- NDIS Information Sessions
- MS Connect
- MS Advisor
- MS Education (webinars)
- Continuity of Support program for people over 65
- Publications, resources and information sheets, [ms.org.au](http://ms.org.au)
- Online tools (My NDIS Filter)

### Featured service: MS Support Coordination



Before her diagnosis, Giselle was a full-time social worker and exhibiting textile artist. That all came crashing down when she was forcibly retired in 2013 because of her symptoms – one of which was a loss of strength made even the act of manually threading a needle impossible.

“Everything I loved doing was taken away from me and I sank into deep depression,” she says.

The NDIS came to the ACT when Giselle had been at “rock bottom” for three years, and she was encouraged by a friend to give it a go.

“My primary goal was to return to the art world, but my initial NDIS contact picked up immediately on the fact that I was isolated from the community, and that was her biggest focus,” Giselle explains. “She said, ‘We can sort out equipment or whatever else you want as secondary, but you need to get out of that house.’”

Giselle then hooked up with MS Support Coordinator Helen who, in addition to guiding her through the process of understanding the NDIS, planning and liaising with the NDIA on her behalf, also helped Giselle find appropriate service providers such as OTs and gardeners to help her begin achieving her goal.

“Helen suggested I hire a support worker to assist me with art-related tasks that my physical limitations prevented me from doing independently. The support worker helped to build my confidence and re-engage with the community. We started off small, playing with techniques at home. She sorted out my art room, which doesn’t sound like much, but it really did get me back into the swing of things.

“She also connected me to experts regarding my health, which made a huge difference.

“Slowly but surely she got me to go out and see local exhibitions and talking to people in the art world. Eventually I went on holiday to America, and a group called SAQA (Studio Art Quilt Associates) recommended me to Quilt National, who had a look at my work and invited me to exhibit in 2019.

“This all came off the back of building my confidence back up, which I don’t think I was in a position to do without my NDIS plan.”

The NDIS works, and we’re proud to be a part of helping people get the most out of it.

### 2016-2017 in numbers

**300**

new NDIS plans  
made active through  
MS Support  
Coordination

**229**

local government  
areas covered by  
our online  
My NDIS Filter  
tool

**120**

people  
attended six weekly  
*Understanding the  
NDIS* webinars

**100**

people attended  
10 NDIS workshops  
in new NSW  
rollout areas

**30**

one-on-one  
pre-planning  
conversations held  
with ACT clients



# OUR SERVICES

## Emotional support

No one can guess exactly what a person affected by multiple sclerosis is feeling – but we understand what they may be going through and how they may need support. No one needs to wait until they're at their lowest before reaching out for support. We want to help people living with multiple sclerosis and their families live well, and ensure no one faces MS alone.

### How do we provide this?

- MS Connect
- MS Social Work Advisor
- MS Peer Support
- NDIS Support Coordination
- MS Education
- Wellness events (Family Camps, Wellness Lunches, Wellness Days, Community Days)
- MS Outreach program

### Featured service: MS Advisor, social work



Joanne has lived with multiple sclerosis for some years now. She'd been living with her husband and son in their own home, but became bedbound as her symptoms worsened.

"As far as what I can physically do," Joanne explains, "I can talk my head off in the mornings, I can wiggle my toes on good day ... and I can hold the TV controls and direct my wheelchair with my right hand, provided someone helps me to transfer into the chair. That's about it."

Joanne called MS Connect when she'd reached the end of her tether. She was confused and needed help. With a complex family situation, a confusing set of paid supports and a case manager she hadn't heard from in two months, she was frustrated and didn't know where to turn.

Joanne heard that the NDIS was coming, and that she needed to be on the Disability Support Register as soon as possible. But she wasn't sure whether her case manager was on top of the relevant forms. "Can MS help?" she asked.

As it turned out, we could. We referred Joanne to our MS Social Work Advisor, who listened to her until they were both crystal-clear on the situation and what could be done to improve it. Then, with Joanne's permission, the Social Work Advisor called Joanne's case manager, who informed them they had neither the time nor the resources to do what Joanne so desperately needed. They also said the packages Joanne was receiving did not place her on the Disability Support Register, which meant she wouldn't be prioritised for the NDIS.

The Social Work Advisor worked with Joanne, her family and the case manager to support them in ensuring that Joanne will be prioritised when the NDIS rolls out into her area. In the process, a review of the services Joanne receives was initiated, and her needs were re-examined. With the case manager, Joanne's support services were adjusted to be more suitable. Her rights about her care were clearly communicated to her and, with a renewed feeling of empowerment, she gained some of the control she felt she'd lost before calling MS.

The MS Social Work Advisor service complemented existing supports, working in partnership and always including Joanne. And she was hugely grateful for the support.

"Thank you for everything you have done for me," she says. "I couldn't have done it without your help."

### 2016-2017 in numbers

**619**

new registrations  
with MS through  
MS Connect

**1000**

hours of phone  
MS Peer Support  
in 950 calls

**100%**

of requests for  
phone support  
matched with  
MS Peer Support  
volunteers

**9** languages

covered by MS Peer  
Support: English, Greek,  
Italian, Chinese, Polish,  
Pakistani, Persian,  
Macedonian,  
Arabic

**4**

Family and Community  
Days hosted by MS  
Education: Taronga Zoo,  
Melbourne Zoo and  
Questacon ACT

# OUR SERVICES

## Connection with others

It's vital for people living with multiple sclerosis to have a network of people around them that they can trust, and who will be there when they need it most. The MS community is wonderfully supportive, and there are many ways to stay connected to each other. Whether someone is newly diagnosed, living well with the disease, a carer of a loved one, a friend wanting to help, or a health professional wanting to find out more – we can help connect them with others in a meaningful way.

### How do we provide this?

- MS Peer Support
- NDIS community activities
- NDIS Gym/Health and Wellbeing programs
- MS Gym/community exercise programs
- Community Visitors Scheme
- Volunteering
- MS Ambassador program
- Wellness events (Family Camps, Wellness Lunches, Wellness Days, Community Days)
- MS Events
- MS Education

### Featured service: MS Peer Support



There are many reasons why a person affected by multiple sclerosis might join an MS Peer Support group. Whether they've been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis or are caring from someone living with the condition, it's one of the best means to access information on a disease that can be confronting, challenging and confusing.

But it quickly grows from there, as Tasmanian MS Peer Support Coordinator Robin explains.

"Each person's multiple sclerosis is their own particular and peculiar disease, but an MS Peer Support group also brings together the connections and similarities," he says.

"Not only can the group provide some of the answers to the many questions the disease presents, but it also becomes a forum to discuss its many variations and continuing changes.

"In many groups – particularly mine in North-West Tasmania – close

friendships have been formed, which allow participants to discuss issues they might not be able to talk about with non-MSers. This is not because the issues are deeply personal or confronting, but more the fact that other people living with multiple sclerosis or caring for someone who does just 'get it'.

"A neurologist knows all the science and physiology behind the disease and can prescribe the appropriate treatments; a doctor can manage various day-to-day issues, and nurses can help with medication and everything else – but none of these highly trained medical professionals live with the disease. People in the MS group do and can relate to, and understand, issues such as neuropathic pain or fatigue, for example.

"A group can also be an important social outlet, as many people living with multiple sclerosis increasingly become isolated from the community. Most groups have an end-of-year function such as a Christmas lunch, and many start off the year with a barbecue and also have a mid-year lunch."

For those with higher needs, complicated schedules or who live in remote parts of the country, we also provide MS Peer Support telegroups, which can be accessed easily and conveniently and provide many of the benefits that people such as Robin hold so dear.

"The advantages of joining an MS Peer Support group are many and worth the effort," Robin says.

### 2016-2017 in numbers

**117**

MS Peer Support  
volunteers

**200+**

pieces of  
MS Community  
artwork displayed at  
2017 MS Art  
Exhibition

**288**

new Community  
Visitors Scheme  
volunteers, and  
567 recipients  
matched

**52**

MS Ambassadors

**1371**

MS event  
volunteers

# OUR SERVICES

## Wellbeing support

We want to help people living with multiple sclerosis and their loved ones live well with the condition, and it is important to view this in a holistic way. Whether that's by knowing which foods or supplements can help people feel good or what form of exercise could make them feel their best, what support there is for carers and family members or what social activities are available – we are here to help people choose the right options for them.

### How do we provide this?

- MS Connect
- MS Advisor
- Online tools (My NDIS Filter, Get your ACT together, Eat Well Live Well)
- NDIS community activities
- NDIS Gym/Health and Wellbeing programs
- Gym/Community Exercise programs
- MS Peer Support
- Community Visitors Scheme
- Volunteering
- MS Ambassador program
- MS Events
- Carers and family support
- Wellness events (Family Camps, Wellness Lunches, Wellness Day, Family Day)
- MS Education
- Publications, resources and information sheets, [ms.org.au](http://ms.org.au)

### Featured service: MS Gym



Regular physical activity benefits anyone who puts in the effort – but regular recreation, active living and a personalised exercise program can be especially helpful for people who wish to live well with multiple sclerosis.

Gai was diagnosed with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis in 1999 and has now gone on to secondary progressive. She began attending the MS Gym in Lidcombe NSW 18 months ago on the advice of MS physiotherapist Dr Phu Hoang, who devised a personalised exercise program that Gai could follow both at the gym and at home.

It didn't take long before Gai was noticing the difference it was making to her wellbeing.

"While my level of fitness is fairly stable compared to some other

attendees of the gym, I find the gym an essential part of my life to help retain my strength and flexibility," she says.

Gai is particularly impressed by the continuing care, attention and expertise with which the MS Gym assists attendees.

"While attending the MS Gym I am assured that I am able to use the correct equipment and receive advice suitable to my needs, which I would not otherwise receive while attending a general gym."

"I am fortunate to have the assistance of Natalie, Caitlin and Phu as they continue to monitor my progress. I've also observed on many occasions as they assist and gently encourage others to extend their progress as they travel through their own exercise regime."

Aside from improved fitness, social connectedness remains a crucial element of wellbeing. Being part of a regular exercise group or program – whether that's at the MS Gym or out in the community, which we can help facilitate – is a perfect way to enjoy both.

"Attending the MS Gym on a regular basis has allowed me to meet others in a similar position to myself and to discuss helpful aspects of this disease, while having a laugh," Gai says. "My only wish is that it was closer to home so that I may attend more often!"

### 2016-2017 in numbers

**123**

people attended 6 MS Education Wellness Days and Lunches

**123**

participants registered at MS Studdy Centre gym, Lidcombe

**66**

participants registered in 6 exercise programs in NSW

**4**

Tai chi courses held by webinar

**4**

new MS Peer Support telegroups commenced



# OUR SERVICES

## Education

We know how important it is to stay up-to-date with the latest information, advice and research in an easy and accessible way, so we have many tools in place to help keep people affected by multiple sclerosis informed on what matters most to them. Our resources are easily accessed, whether it be over the phone, online, face-to-face or within someone's local community.

### How do we provide this?

- MS Connect
- MS Advisor – nursing, continence and social work
- MS Education
- Symptom management
- Health Professional programs (webinars and in-services)
- MS Employment
- MS NDIS services
- NDIS Gym/Health and Wellbeing programs
- MS Gym/Community Exercise programs
- Publications, resources and information sheets, [ms.org.au](http://ms.org.au)
- Online tools (My NDIS Filter, Get your ACT together, Eat Well Live Well)
- Advocacy
- Research
- Wellness events (Family Camps, Wellness Lunches, Wellness Day, Family Day)

### 2016-2017 in numbers

**2183**

health professionals  
provided with  
information by  
MS Connect

**30**

MS Education  
programs held for  
health professionals  
and community  
workers

**12,450**

people viewed  
recorded MS Education  
webinars, and 1505  
took part live

**123**

people attended 6  
MS Education Wellness  
Days and Lunches

**10,000+**

subscribers received  
*Intouch* eNewsletters  
and magazines

### Featured service: MS Education – community day



Our MS Community Days give parents living with multiple sclerosis and their children the opportunity to share their feelings better, understand each other and build strategies to nurture family wellbeing in a fun, social and supportive environment.

They're regularly hosted by MS Educators at venues such as the Taronga and Melbourne Zoos and Questacon Canberra – but this year a grant from Skipper-Jacobs Charitable Trust allowed us to take 11 parents and their teens out on Sydney Harbour for a day's sailing aboard the tall ship *Tenacious*, which is purpose-built to allow it to be sailed by people with varied physical abilities.

It was a perfect opportunity to promote family wellbeing in a unique setting. Although the weather didn't play ball, with violent seas making life difficult outside the tranquility of the harbour, even that aspect became a valuable learning experience for the kids onboard.

Several teens turned green as soon as *Tenacious* began to roll violently. One was Ashton, 16, who sailed with his mum Katherine.

"He got really sick and had to battle though every sailing-related task – which, to his credit, he did," Katherine says. "But since everyone else was in the same boat, so to speak, and feeling queasy to some degree, it was a real leveller.

"It was also a lesson to the kids in what us parents with multiple sclerosis deal with on a daily basis: you might be feeling like crap, but you just have to soldier on."

Katherine took inspiration from the way teamwork overcame the most challenging of the day's tasks aboard *Tenacious*.

"What was wonderful about being on the ship was that, even though it was difficult conditions, I knew there were people there supporting me," she says. "The ship crew and the MS team – people who knew exactly what I'd need.

"It's the same as in life, really. There's nothing you can't get through if you're surrounded by people who understand."

# OUR SERVICES

## Research

Finding a cure for multiple sclerosis is the ultimate goal, but we also know how important it is to invest in research to find ways of living well with the disease until the cure is found. In addition to conducting our own social and applied research, we work alongside other organisations such as MS Research Australia to help fund and share the latest discoveries and information.

### How do we provide this?

- Contribution and collaboration with MS Research Australia
- Advocacy in collaboration with MS Australia
- Social and applied research
- Publications, resources and information sheets, [ms.org.au](http://ms.org.au)
- *Intouch* eNewsletter and magazine

### Featured service: MS research update



MS is primarily a service organisation concerned with supporting people affected by multiple sclerosis and ensuring they are equipped to live well. That includes the ability to access affordable and effective treatment options, which makes our investment and collaboration in multiple sclerosis research crucial.

While a cure continues to elude the world's best and brightest, research has made huge leaps forward in not just our understanding of multiple sclerosis but also the many ways in which it can be treated and disease progression significantly delayed. The goals of treatment are to minimise, prevent or reverse disability.

World Federation of Neurologists President Prof William Carroll, who also serves on the MS Australia Board, highlights the importance of our collaborative approach to this kind of research.

"Advances in multiple sclerosis treatments depend on collaborative teamwork, a shared passion to control disease activity-induced injury and disability, and commitments by all involved to this common goal," Prof Carroll says. "The MS family in Australia is a world leader in this area. We clinicians (nurses and doctors) and people living with multiple sclerosis are fortunate to have organisations such as MS, MS Research Australia and MS Australia dedicated to these goals."

Evidence favours early treatment, which equates to better outcomes – and in February, two Australians made a huge breakthrough in facilitating early diagnosis when they discovered the world's first blood biomarker for multiple sclerosis.

Macquarie University's Dr Edwin Lim and Prof Gilles Guillemin led a major study that uncovered the chemical identifier. They expect that within two years, it will lead to a simple blood test that will identify what type of multiple sclerosis a person has, which will allow clinicians to adapt treatments for patients quickly and more accurately.

This project was partly funded by MS Research Australia who, with our support, are among a handful of organisations leading the way internationally – particularly through the International Progressive MS Alliance.

We stand by our ongoing commitment to multiple sclerosis research in all its forms; we celebrate what it's achieved so far, and we look forward to the day the tireless work of the worldwide scientific community has cured this disease.

### 2016-2017 in numbers

**\$317,000**

contributed by us  
to MS Research  
Australia

**146**

MS additional clients  
joined the Australian  
MS Longitudinal  
Study (AMSLS)

**1830**

people from ACT,  
NSW, VIC and TAS  
now participating in  
the AMSLS

**1523**

surveys completed by  
participants in our  
Multiple Sclerosis and  
Oral Health study

**1**

new treatment  
option included on  
Pharmaceuticals  
Benefits Scheme

# OUR ADVOCACY

## MS Australia

MS Australia is the national peak body for people affected by multiple sclerosis. While we handle the services and support for the MS community in NSW, ACT, Victoria and Tasmania, MS Australia manages national policy issues – in particular, interacting the Federal Government. Along with the MS organisations in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia/ Northern Territory, we provide financial support to MS Australia to ensure the needs and concerns of the MS community are voiced within the nation's highest sphere of influence.

### MS Australia works on behalf of the MS community in a number of ways:

**Advocacy and awareness:** Providing expertise on multiple sclerosis-related issues at a national level and through submissions, conferences, media and other forums.

**Support for member organisations:** Working with and representing us, and the other state-based MS organisations, to meet the needs of the MS community.

**Research:** Supporting and collaborating with MS Research Australia, advancing research into the cause, prevention and a cure for multiple sclerosis.

**International collaboration:** As a member of the Multiple Sclerosis International Federation (MSIF) and other leading global bodies, advancing the interests of people affected by multiple sclerosis throughout the Asia Pacific and other regions.

**Communication and information:** Sharing resources, updates and news for people living with multiple sclerosis, through various communication platforms including the MS Australia website, blog posts and social media.

### Featured advocacy: NAA Joint Position Statement launch



MS Australia plays a leading role in the Neurological Alliance Australia (NAA), with CEO Deidre Mackechnie chairing the NAA and National Policy Officer Andrew Giles providing secretariat support.

The NAA comprises 10 peak bodies representing neurological conditions. This year they identified a number of shared issues relating to the implementation of the NDIS and decided that, to highlight and progress these issues, they would launch a Joint Position Statement on the NDIS at a combined Parliamentary Friends of MS event.

The statement calls for equitable and effective support from the NDIS for people living with progressive neurological diseases, and increased investment in research. The Alliance believes the NDIS has the power to transform the lives of people living with

progressive neurodegenerative diseases and this Statement sets out recommendations to ensure better NDIS outcomes.

Hosted by Senator Deborah O'Neill (Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of MS) on 22 March 2017, the event was well attended by Alliance members and representatives, MPs, Senators and their advisors.

Deidre Mackechnie officially launched the Joint Position Statement, outlining the recommendations designed to ensure better outcomes for people with progressive neurodegenerative conditions.

And MS Australia National Advocacy Coordinator Andrew Potter, who lives with multiple sclerosis, shared his hopes for a cure and the need to improve aspects of NDIS implementation.

The launch was aired on Channel 9 Canberra and for a time the Twitter handle #NAAAction (supported by #NAA) was trending No.1 in Australia. A subsequent story aired on ABCTV, online and radio nationally profiling two people and their NDIS experiences in WA and NSW.

The Alliance will continue to pursue these topics at meetings with parliamentarians and decision-makers, to both progress the recommendations and seek increased investment in research – and MS Australia will continue to ensure the needs of people living with multiple sclerosis are front and centre.

### 2016-2017 in numbers

**\$565,000**

contributed by us to MS Australia

**12**

submissions made to government enquiries

**2** submissions

made to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, for affordable access to Copaxone and Ocrevus

**68**

publications on multiple sclerosis reviewed. Editing process commenced for 18 national-level symptom/info sheets by end 2017

**14**

revised/new/approved treatment sheets complete



# OUR ADVISORY BODIES

## MS Advisory Councils and Board

MS Advisory Councils are a conduit between the MS Board and the MS community. All council members are people living with multiple sclerosis, or carers. Regular meetings discuss trends and issues raised within the MS community, and similarly the Councils are offered opportunity to respond to the MS organisation's proposals and matters that might affect the MS community.

The Councils reach out to as many people in the MS community as possible – through their networks, via social media and through other opportunities that arise. They often undertake projects on topics of importance and relevance to the MS community, and provide specific input to the Board when each project is completed.

We have a Council representing each state community: the MS Advisory Councils of NSW, Victoria and Tasmania.

The ACT Southern NSW Regional Advisory Board has a similar role to the Councils plus some extra local responsibilities. In addition to including people living with multiple sclerosis and carers as members, the Regional Board also includes others with a commitment to the MS community.

### Who's who



#### MS Advisory Council of Victoria

Chair: Nigel Caswell OAM

#### MS Advisory Council of NSW

Chair: Margaret (Meg) McIntyre ASM

#### MS Advisory Council of Tasmania

Co-chairs: Andrew Potter and Vivienne Jones

#### ACT Southern NSW Regional Advisory Board

Chair: Ron Brent

### Key projects/achievements for 2016-2017

The ACT Southern NSW Regional Advisory Board played a key role in representing the views of the MS community in relation to the redevelopment of Gloria McKerrow House.

MSAC-Vic instigated the development of a Fire Preparedness webinar, and was heavily involved in the development of the MS information sheet and checklist *Preparing for your Neurologist Appointment*, which was also developed into a webinar.

### A changing landscape

MSAC-Tas was established in May 2017, following our merger with MS Tasmania in July 2016. "While it's early days, we are embracing ways to representing the needs and views of our local MS community as well as working collaboratively with the Councils in Victoria, NSW and ACT where synergies exist," says Co-chair Andrew.

In NSW, our largest state in which geography poses the greatest challenge, MSAC-NSW Chair Meg McIntyre has embarked upon a review of how the Council meets and operates, and is recruiting new members after the departure of several long-serving members. "Modern technology brings us closer together more easily than ever, and we have the opportunity to create something truly special across NSW for the MS community," says Meg. "I'm very much looking forward to being part of this next phase."

### Special acknowledgements

We wish to thank the following former Council members for their service, support and friendship – and, most importantly, their commitment to their local MS communities:

#### MSAC-Vic

Kate Cherry, Pat Campbell

#### MSAC-NSW

Rob de Ridder, Brendan George, Brian Lee, Margot Whitfield, Wendy Berkley

#### ACT Southern NSW Regional Advisory Board

Carol Lance

# OUR PEOPLE

## Culture of total commitment

Nothing is more important to a service organisation than its people – and at MS, we're particularly proud of the commitment with which our team members and volunteers approach their delivery of services and supports that help people live well with multiple sclerosis.

Culturally, MS is built on Our Service Promise – the four guiding principles that define our people's attitudes and behaviours (right).



MS has earned its reputation as a trusted and respected service organisation because of the complete buy-in of our people to these principles. And it's not hard to see why.

A recent survey of the MS team revealed close to 50 per cent had a personal connection to multiple sclerosis prior to starting with us. More than a quarter of those have friends living with multiple sclerosis, while 10 per cent have family members living with the condition and the remaining 10 per cent either live with it themselves or care for someone who does.

These connections are only part of what drives our team to serving the MS community, and we're enormously proud of the work they do and the outcomes they help people achieve.

We're equally proud of our volunteer workforce – the heroes of our organisation without whom, in the current funding environment, we would not be able to function effectively.

Our four major fundraising events – the MS Walk + Fun Run, the MS Gong Ride, the MS Melbourne Cycle and the MS 24 Hour Mega Swim – were supported by almost 1400 volunteers whose hard work and enthusiasm continues to impress and inspire everyone who takes part.

Our MS Ambassador program, founded in 1999 to educate and inspire the wider community, has in that time given 2959 presentations to a combined audience of 2,599,304 people. And this year the program's coordinator, Trish Mifsud, received the prestigious Sir Louis Pyke Award, which recognises one person's significant contribution to people living with multiple sclerosis.

One of our volunteers, William Craddock, reached an incredible 25-year milestone of service. Two Community Visitors Scheme volunteers, Shirley Yut and Fong Yong, marked 15 years, while Roy Miller, Elizabeth Connor, Bill Hardy and Merran Spinaze celebrated 10.

And we awarded our annual Seeing MS Award, which recognises people's efforts in exposing the invisible disease – to two worthy winners: Martin Rossleigh, a Sydney schoolteacher who has championed the MS Readathon since 1980; and Tina Ruhs, whose incredible fundraising efforts have included almost \$250,000 from the MS Gong Ride.

### Featured volunteer: 'Min' Brown

When Merlinda "Min" Brown was diagnosed 13 years ago, it naturally came as a devastating shock – but on the other hand, she was happy to finally have an answer for the symptoms she'd been experiencing.

Min's diagnosis her experience living with multiple sclerosis led her to volunteering with MS, as a way to meet other people and share in their journeys with the condition.

For the past eight years now, she's been part of our events volunteering team – both assisting at the Royal National Park Lunch Stop for the MS Sydney to the Gong Ride, and as a course marshal at the NSW MS Walk + Fun Run. This year Min also became an MS Ambassador so she could share her story and encourage others to get involved.

"The best thing about volunteering at MS events is meeting all the participants and hearing their stories and the reasons for getting involved," Min says.

"I would encourage people to get involved



because it's fulfilling and always so much fun!"

As an event volunteer, Min enjoys "helping people in a small but important way" – but there's nothing small about the impact volunteers have on the success of our events.

After so many years, what keeps Min volunteering?

"I get a chance to educate people about MS and meet some extraordinary people spending their free time to raise money," she says. "I also get to have fun!"

### 2016-2017 in numbers

**261**

MS team members  
across 19 sites

**393,893**

hours worked  
by MS team

**1371**

volunteers worked  
7645 hours for  
MS Events

**111**

volunteers in client  
services

**52**

MS Ambassadors

# OUR FUNDRAISING

## Building a secure future

Our fundraising activities remain more important than ever. The money we receive from generous donors is critical to supporting the MS services that are not funded through other means – and yet with more than 50,000 charities in Australia, including many high-profile, well-resourced causes, there is strong competition to secure the gifts of generous Australians.

The 2016-2017 financial year was strong for us, with Ben Holgate joining the team as our GM of Strategic Fundraising. We continue to review all our fundraising streams so we can make the best decisions on where to invest in future fundraising growth. This review will focus on whether our fundraising portfolio remains fully fit for purpose in a fast-changing world, and on identifying innovative new opportunities to raise more funds for people affected by multiple sclerosis.

What is certain is that our fundraising will continue to focus on building long-term, respectful relationships with a community of donors who are deeply committed to assisting people affected by multiple sclerosis. Our core events, such as the MS Sydney to the Gong ride, the MS Melbourne Cycle, the MS Walk + Fun Run and the MS 24 Hour Mega Swim, are great platforms for building this community. In future years we will focus on the value of these relationships, as we recognise that even the most modest donations, when made over many years, can have a dramatic impact on the life of a person living with multiple sclerosis.

We will be building on our acknowledged expertise in event fundraising to improve and expand our portfolio of events, through our new joint venture with GTR Events. This unique partnership has already delivered cost efficiencies and freed up resources to build for the future.

But fundraising at MS is about more than our fantastic events. We will be looking to both technology and to other forms of fundraising to create a balanced portfolio of fundraising income that secures the future of the services the MS community need to provide permanent core services.

### Featured event: MS Gong Ride participants

The 35th anniversary of the iconic MS Gong Ride was always going to be big, but the sheer scale of it ended up being stunning – especially the generosity of all those who rode, fundraised, donated and volunteered.

Everyone's MS Gong Ride story is unique, and all are to be applauded. But this time around we were particularly impressed by the achievement of one team. There's going the distance, and then there's the Sydney to Melbourne Cyclers who, after reaching Wollongong, just kept on riding.

Team captain Colin Kidd did the 2016 MS Gong Ride with the Sydney Cyclers just months after his wife, Gen, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

This year, he and five other Cyclers decided to go one step further – well, 1118km further – to raise awareness about multiple sclerosis.

It took them a week, with stops at Nowra, Batesmans Bay, Merimbula, Mallacotta, Orbost, Sale and Warragul.

And if the incredible physical feat wasn't enough, they broke through their target of \$60,000 in fundraising as they pedalled in to East Melbourne.

But the cherry on top was the impact they made on the public wherever they went. Nothing summed this up better than an encounter one of the riders, Mitchell, had at Melbourne Airport as he was about to fly home.



Waiting to board and talking about the week with family, a stranger overheard their conversation and politely interrupted: 'Are you those guys that rode from Sydney to Melbourne?'.

This sparked a lengthy discussion about the ride and their connections to multiple sclerosis. The gentleman went on to say he had ridden the MS Gong Ride for the past five years and had followed the Sydney to Melbourne Cyclers' story. He went on to congratulate Mitchell and was, needless to say, incredibly impressed, inspired and encouraged.

As the Sydney to Melbourne Cyclers team wrote on Facebook later that day, "It's moments like this that make the long hours in the saddle worth it."

## 2016-2017 in numbers

**\$5,905,000**  
raised from events

**\$1,354,000**  
from appeals, plus a  
further \$665,000 from  
donations

**\$861,000**  
from Trusts and  
Foundations

**\$937,000**  
from art unions  
and raffles

**\$369,000**  
from community  
fundraising

**\$224,000**  
from MS Readathon

**\$1,841,000**  
from MS Community  
Shops

**24,187**  
people participated  
in MS fundraising  
events



# THE YEAR IN FUNDRAISING

## Trusts and Foundations

Submissions to Trusts and Foundations, and other funding bodies, contributed \$861,000 to support a range of capital equipment, a family camp, wellness days, a sailing day and various programs to assist people with multiple sclerosis their family and carers.

## MS Readathon

In 2016 we worked with an educational agency to develop materials to make it easier for teachers to integrate the MS Readathon activity within the classroom. Teachers responded very well to this approach and we plan to use these materials in future campaigns.

## MS 24 Hour Mega Swim

The MS 24 Hour Mega Swim conducted 19 events including further expansion of 24 Hour MegaSquash events in regional Victoria. During the past 18 years, the MS 24 Hour Mega Swim has fundraised \$9 million supporting services, support and 600 MS Go for Gold Scholarships.

## MS Gong Ride

The MS Sydney to the Gong Ride reached a milestone 35th year with more than 9000 participants taking part in the iconic event. The MS Gong Ride continues to be the largest fundraising bike ride in Australia.

## MS Melbourne Cycle

In its second year at Flemington Racecourse, the MS Melbourne Cycle enjoyed perfect weather, making the ride over the West Gate Bridge a memorable experience for participants. Also, the second year for the safe closed-road Family Ride was enjoyed by a growing number of participants, who were delighted by Daryl the Farmer petting zoo at the Event Village.

## MS Walk + Fun Run

The events in NSW and ACT were conducted earlier this year, in April rather than the traditional first Sunday in June. Pyrmont was the new location for the NSW MS Walk + Fun Run, bringing the event back to the city. Victoria was staged in June and was again supported by more than 5000 participants walking and running around scenic Albert Park Lake, united in a sea of red.

## MS Community Shops

Our MS Community Shops' income performed well, with donations steady and sales generating \$1,841,000 – an increase from the previous year. This was mainly achieved with the introduction of new, experienced managers joining our team, and by keeping costs down.



**3002 MS Melbourne Cycle**  
participants raised **\$451,000**



**9421 MS Sydney to the Gong Ride**  
participants raised **\$2,981,000**



**8798 MS Walk & Fun Run**  
participants raised **\$1,053,000**



**2966 MS 24 Hour Mega Swim**  
participants raised **\$924,000**

# CONCISE FINANCIALS

## Surplus provides foundation

MS reported another surplus for this financial year (\$6.9 million) including higher-than-average bequest income and the one-off gain recorded as a result of the merger with The MS Society of Tasmania on 1 July 2017. At the Group level this was reduced to \$2.2 million as a result of a write down in the value of Goodwill (\$4.7 million).

The work to restructure MS' operations to meet the challenges of transitioning to the fee-for-service model under the NDIS is starting to show results, with MS recording its first underlying operating surplus (\$1.8 million) since the 2014 financial year.

While the return to an operating surplus is a great result, this year's result included some transitional funding which will diminish over time. We are committed to continuously improving the way we operate as a core strategy to achieve sustainability.

Our MS Support Coordination service, introduced last year, has been well received by those using the service and we anticipate significant growth in this area as the transition to NDIS continues.

The implementation of the NDIS will not be completed until 30 June 2020. Only when the implementation is complete and all government funding is replaced by the fee-for-service income under the NDIS will we know the full impact of the transition to NDIS on our operations. We already know that it is harder to generate a surplus on NDIS services as a result of the regulated pricing model.

We must use the strong results from the past few years to build reserves and develop new sources of income to ensure we remain sustainable in the longer term so that we can continue to meet the ongoing demand for MS services and support ongoing research.

In the coming year we will continue to focus on building sustainability through service innovation, effective cost management and leveraging our reserves.

## Our financial performance summary

	2016–2017 (\$'000)	2015–2016 (\$'000)	2014–2015 (\$'000)	2013–2014 (\$'000)
<b>Income</b>				
<i>Rendering of Services</i>				
Government funding	14,470	18,165	17,756	16,421
NDIS	3,044	0	0	0
Other	2,086	1,051	624	730
	19,600	19,216	18,380	17,151
 Fundraising & events including bequest income	14,813	15,282	15,760	16,642
Corporate services (management fees, rental income)	727	263	260	349
Investment income	2,498	3,614	2,280	486
<b>Total income</b>	<b>37,638</b>	<b>38,375</b>	<b>36,680</b>	<b>34,628</b>
 <b>Expenditure</b>				
Rendering of services	19,942	21,834	21,601	22,179
Fundraising and events	9,440	8,990	9,081	9,330
Corporate	435	346	463	801
Research and advocacy	882	862	1,100	830
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>30,699</b>	<b>32,032</b>	<b>32,245</b>	<b>33,140</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>6,939</b>	<b>6,343</b>	<b>4,435</b>	<b>1,488</b>

# CONCISE FINANCIALS

## Financial highlights

Please note these figures are based on the Multiple Sclerosis Limited standalone results (i.e. they exclude Australian Home Care):

Total revenue for the financial year was: \$37,638,733

Total expenditure for the year was \$30,699,393

MS recorded a surplus for the current financial year of \$6,939,340

This is an increase of \$596,602

Operating revenue in 2016–2017 increased by just 1.1% as the transition to the NDIS commenced

MS received government income of \$18,393,807 and spent \$19,941,934 on MS services.

Expenditure on MS research and advocacy funding totalled \$881,844

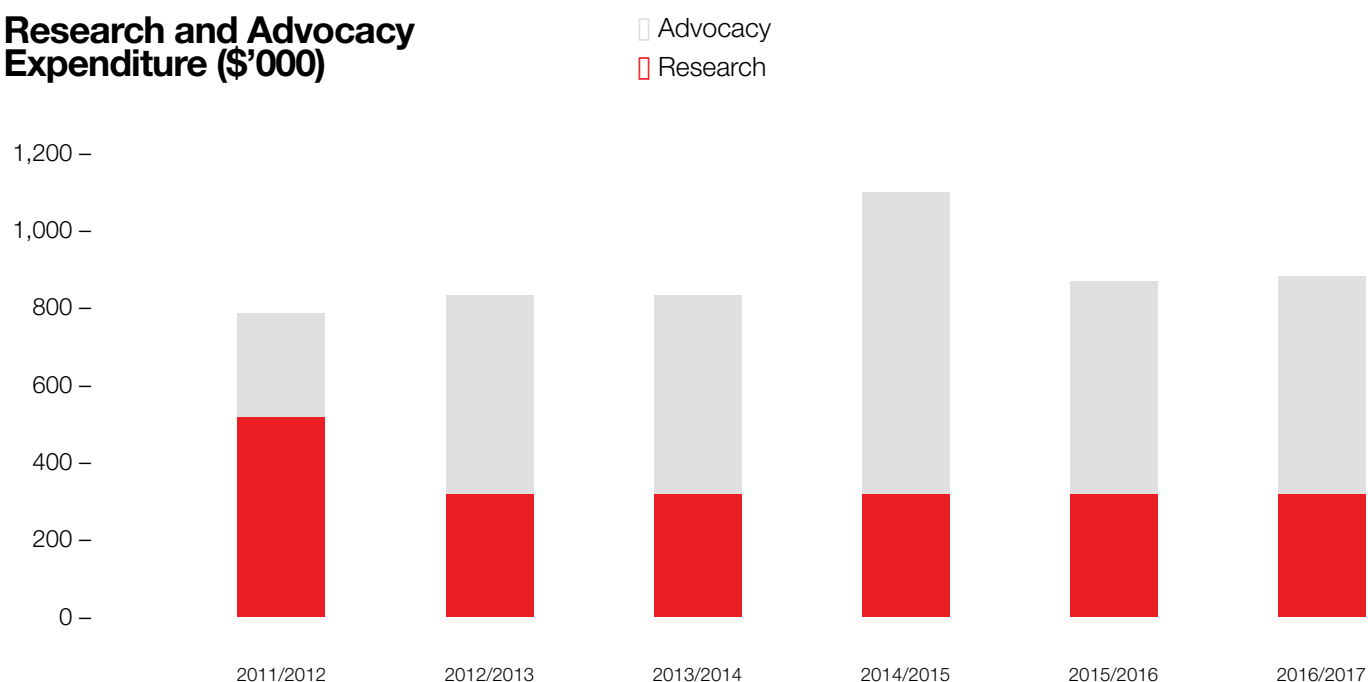




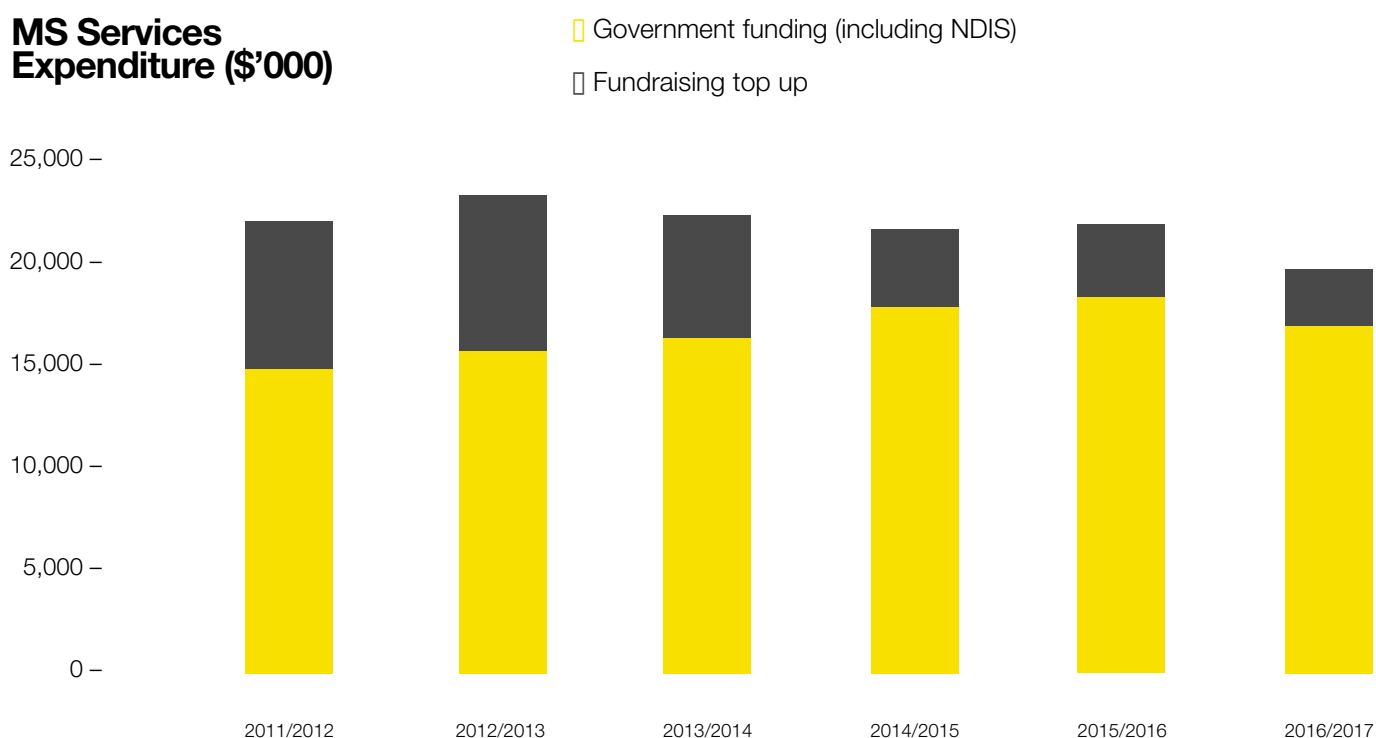
# CONCISE FINANCIALS

## Financial highlights

### Research and Advocacy Expenditure (\$'000)



### MS Services Expenditure (\$'000)



# CONCISE FINANCIALS

## Multiple Sclerosis Limited and its controlled entities

### Consolidated statement of surplus or deficit and other comprehensive income

For year ended 30 June 2017

<i>In AUD</i>	<b>Consolidated</b>	
	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Fundraising	14,812,918	15,281,956
Rendering of services	101,302,962	107,214,165
Corporate services	724,240	185,325
Other income	560,793	229,984
<b>Total revenue and other income from operating activities</b>	<b>117,400,913</b>	<b>122,911,430</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>MSL</b>		
Fundraising expenses	7,754,164	7,270,872
Residential care expenses	7,030,765	8,681,249
Community teams expenses	3,553,772	4,911,728
Disability day programs expenses	946,520	858,248
Employment services expenses	3,456,744	3,585,318
Other client services expenses	5,216,428	3,521,023
Retail expenses	1,686,570	1,719,430
Other expenses	824,833	1,207,798
<b>AHCS</b>		
Homecare and acute nursing direct expenses	43,798,024	44,835,560
Cleaning and laundry direct expenses	35,464,660	42,616,235
Nationwide goodwill impairment	4,750,772	–
Corporate and regional overhead expenses	3,502,218	3,296,570
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>117,985,470</b>	<b>122,504,031</b>
<b>Deficit/surplus from operations</b>	<b>(584,557)</b>	<b>407,399</b>
Finance income	514,757	574,708
Finance expenses	(13,668)	(31,335)
<b>Net finance income</b>	<b>501,089</b>	<b>543,373</b>
Loss/profit on sale of property, plant and equipment	(42,460)	3,099,078
Surplus resulting from merger with MS Tasmania	2,065,114	–
Net surplus before income tax	1,939,186	4,049,850
Income tax expense	–	–
<b>Net surplus for the year</b>	<b>1,939,186</b>	<b>4,049,850</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>		
Available-for-sale financial assets – net change in fair value	244,196	(242,061)
Total other comprehensive income	244,196	(242,061)
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>2,183,382</b>	<b>3,807,789</b>

# CONCISE FINANCIALS

## Multiple Sclerosis Limited and its controlled entities

### Consolidated statement of financial position

As at 30 June 2017

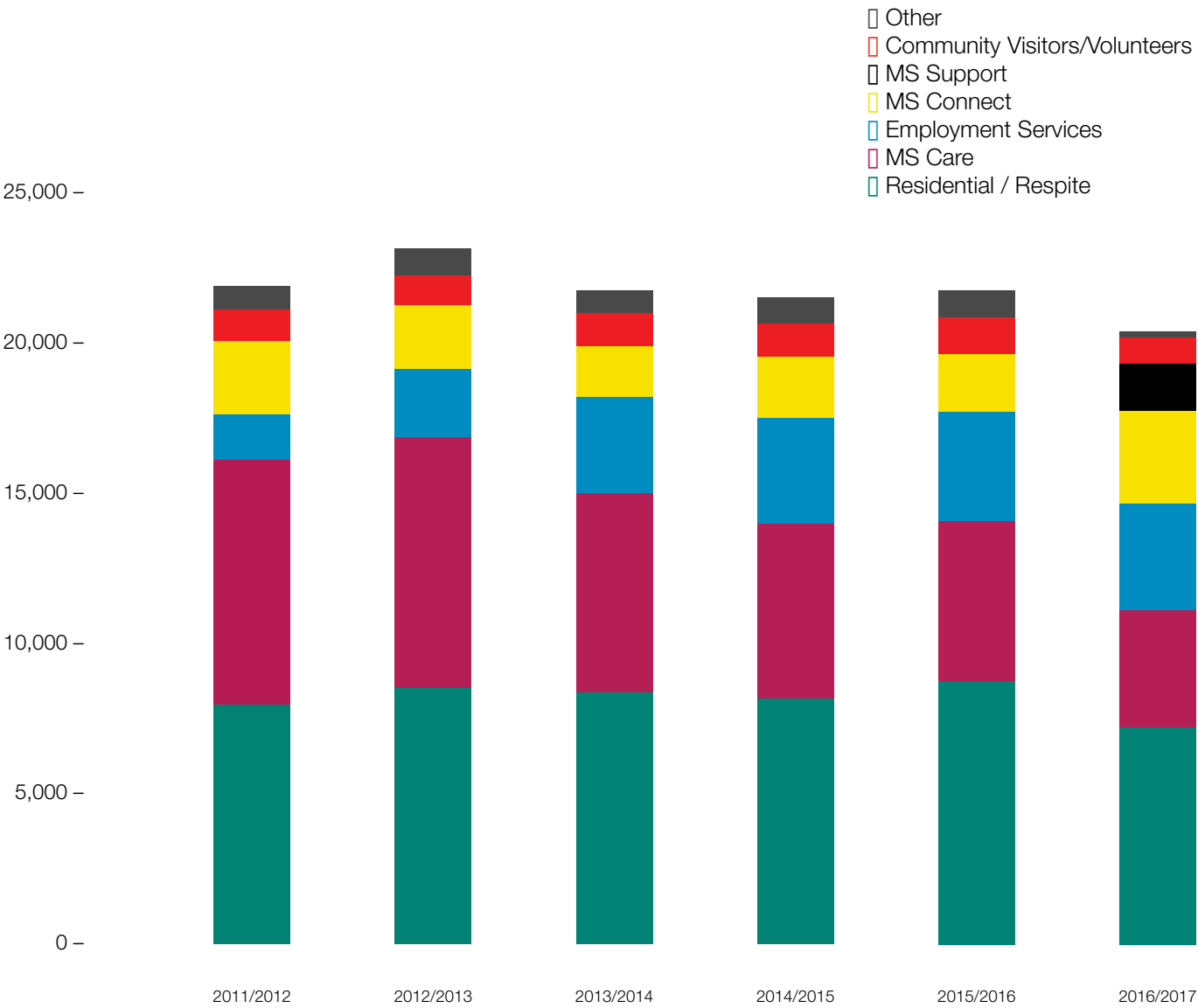
<i>In AUD</i>	<b>Consolidated</b>	
	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	15,884,051	14,192,270
Other financial assets	7,328,493	2,629,132
Trade and other receivables	9,556,466	8,288,729
Non-current assets held for sale	1,635,438	-
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>34,404,448</b>	<b>25,110,131</b>
Property, plant and equipment	16,405,946	17,276,287
Intangible assets	8,038,755	13,400,710
Available-for-sale financial assets	4,852,190	4,224,117
Other receivables	582,310	1,166,445
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>29,879,201</b>	<b>36,067,559</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>64,283,649</b>	<b>61,177,690</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Bank overdraft	-	51,097
Trade and other payables	5,085,422	5,100,546
Employee benefits	12,811,681	13,424,823
Deferred income and funds in advance	12,416,475	10,696,850
Hire purchase liabilities	-	110,668
Provisions	161,800	129,400
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>30,475,378</b>	<b>29,513,384</b>
Employee benefits	930,175	974,974
Hire purchase liabilities	-	-
Provisions	272,256	266,874
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>1,202,431</b>	<b>1,241,848</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>31,677,809</b>	<b>30,755,232</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>32,605,840</b>	<b>30,422,458</b>
<b>Members' funds</b>		
Accumulated surplus	30,912,440	29,641,633
Fair value reserve	953,243	709,047
Bequest reserve	740,157	71,778
<b>Total members' funds</b>	<b>32,605,840</b>	<b>30,422,458</b>



# CONCISE FINANCIALS

## Financial highlights

### MS services expenditure by category



# CONCISE FINANCIALS

## Where the money came from

These figures are based on the Multiple Sclerosis Limited standalone results, and they exclude Australian Home care.

Fundraising and Events:  
\$14,812,918

Government Funding:  
\$18,393,807

MS Services:  
\$1,206,087

Corporate and  
Other Services  
\$727,350

Investment income  
\$2,498,571

**Total Income**  
**\$37,638,733**



CONCISE FINANCIALS

Where our money was spent

MS Services:  
\$19,941,934

Fundraising & Events:  
\$9,440,734



Research and Advocacy:  
\$881,844

Corporate Services:  
\$491,864





Multiple Sclerosis Limited  
operating as MS  
ABN: 66 004 942 287

**Registered office:**

The Nerve Centre  
54 Railway Rd  
Blackburn, Victoria 3130  
P: +61 3 9845 2700  
F: +61 3 9845 2777  
E: [blackburn.reception@ms.org.au](mailto:blackburn.reception@ms.org.au)

T MS Connect,  
freecall **1800 042 138**  
W **[www.ms.org.au](http://www.ms.org.au)**  
E **[msconnect@ms.org.au](mailto:msconnect@ms.org.au)**



## Contact us

**Australian Capital Territory head office**

Gloria McKerrow House  
117 Denison St  
Deakin, ACT 2600

**New South Wales head office**

Studdy MS Centre  
80 Betty Cuthbert Dr  
Lidcombe, NSW 2141

**Victoria head office**

The Nerve Centre  
54 Railway Rd  
Blackburn, Victoria 3130

**Tasmania head office**

15 Princess Street  
Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7005