



# *Progress*

## IMPACT REPORT

How you made 2020 a year full  
of hope for people affected by MS



A welcome message from

*Rohan Greenland*

## THE END OF MS IS NOW CLOSER THAN EVER, THANKS TO YOU

**I would like to thank you for your generosity and kindness.**

You've allowed us to continue research into multiple sclerosis (MS) in 2020, despite the challenges of COVID-19.

The pandemic brought massive disruption. It closed labs and halted clinical trials. Your support meant progress didn't stop.

Thanks to you, researchers are still making new discoveries about MS every day.

Seeing those advances has been inspiring. It's showed me the MS community is strong and resilient, and with your ongoing support I'm confident we can find a cure.

I hope you enjoy reading about some of the things you've helped make possible in 2020.

**Over the past 12 months, you truly have changed lives.**

With my deepest thanks,



A blue ink handwritten signature of Rohan Greenland.

**Rohan Greenland**  
Chief Executive Officer

**“I’M PINNING MY HOPES ON A CURE. THE FACT THAT IT COULD HAPPEN IN MY LIFETIME IS AMAZING!”**

*- Amber, living with MS*



**When I was diagnosed with MS, my first question was ‘am I going to see my kids grow up?’ At the time, I knew very little about the disease and had a young family to look after.**

Seeing how much research is being done here in Australia really gives me hope.

There's loads of research being done into what causes MS, finding better treatments, and how to manage your symptoms day-to-day. Obviously, that's so, so important.

For me personally, the most exciting things are the studies around reversing the damage caused by MS, plus the knowledge that there's a good likelihood of a cure.



# 2020 WAS A YEAR OF INCREDIBLE PROGRESS

*and you helped  
make it all possible!*

## You powered research through the pandemic

- Thanks to you, MS Research Australia could provide a funding lifeline of \$275k to researchers most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure they could continue to answer vital MS research questions.
- Your support meant we could fund two registries to track people with MS who contracted COVID-19. The registries collected data on how the virus affects people with MS – which could help inform treatment and management in the future.

## Thanks to you, more MS treatments are coming

- December 2020 marked the final phase of the vitamin D MS Prevention Trial – PrevANZ which is a world-first clinical trial testing whether vitamin D supplementation can prevent MS in those at risk of developing the disease. The results of this exciting trial are expected later this year.
- Siponimod (Mayzent®), the first treatment for secondary progressive MS is now available at an affordable price, and listed

on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). All thanks to tireless advocacy, funded by your support.

## You're driving new research forward

- With your help, MS Research Australia partnered with St Vincent's Curran Foundation to help establish a Centre of Excellence in Cellular Therapy at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney. The Centre will accelerate research into AHSCT and cellular therapies which could change the lives of people with MS.
- Thanks to you, we have launched a new national collaborative platform, an innovative new patient-centred healthcare tool, InforMS. This online tool will be used to monitor symptoms, inform treatment decisions, and make it easy for people with MS to share their insights with researchers.

*Thank you!*

# CAN CHANGING YOUR DIET TRANSFORM YOUR MS?

*Your support means we're closer to finding out...*

After being diagnosed with MS in her early 20s, Associate Professor Yasmine Probst went on to become a leading dietitian and nutritionist.

Now, she's using her expertise – and personal experience – to investigate whether a change in diet could stabilise and improve the symptoms of MS.

Thanks to you, Yasmine's on track to both produce a guide to healthy eating for people with MS and find new ways to control the disease in addition to medication. Yasmine's ultimate goal is to run a dietary clinical trial, which could be a game-changer for people with MS.

***"Finding a cure would be the ultimate, for me, my kids, and everyone with MS. It's something I'd love to see in my lifetime."*** – Yasmine



## This is an MS Research Australia first – and YOU made it happen

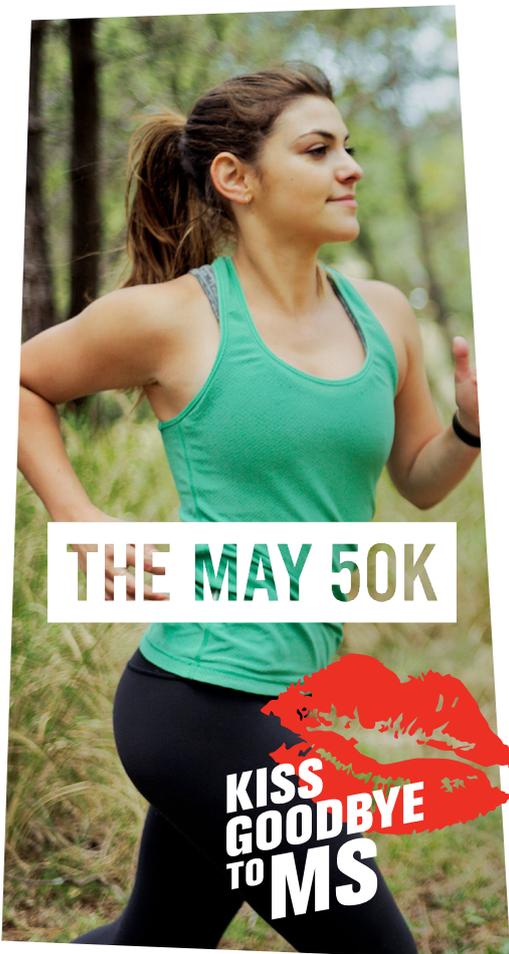
2020 was a difficult year for us all. When times got tough, the MS community rallied together to achieve something incredible.

**During the pandemic, The May 50K raised a record-breaking \$6.6 million for MS research. As a result, every eligible research application was awarded a 2021 grant.**

Every year, we receive many promising research applications and any one of them could hold the key to stopping and reversing the effects of MS. In previous years, we had to turn some of them down, simply because we didn't have the funds.

Last year, you changed that – and 20 new research projects began earlier this year. You helped fund incubator grants, fellowships, scholarships, and projects to promote global collaborations and innovative research.

**All of which will help change the lives of people with MS and bring us closer to a cure. Thank you!**



# Over 25,000 Australians with MS want to say **THANK YOU!**

Right now there are 25,600 Australians living with MS, and in 2020 you helped change the lives of every one of them.

With your support, we produced two evidence-based lifestyle guides. They're vital new tools for people living with MS, their families, carers, and for healthcare professionals.

The guides have been created by experts and are full of advice about how self-care strategies and changes to daily habits can improve disease outcomes.

They're now available for free to everyone in Australia – and for the millions of people living with MS all over the world.

To view the guides [CLICK HERE](#)



## For this researcher, it's personal

**Almost 10 years ago, Professor David Tschärke noticed a tingling and numbness in his hands. He went to see a neurologist and was diagnosed with MS.**

Until then, David had worked as a virologist. After his diagnosis he began researching MS too and was recently awarded an MS Research Australia incubator grant.

His current project sets out to solve a problem everyone with MS faces – how to know if a medication is effective or not before a relapse occurs. That research could change David's own life, and the lives of countless others living with MS.

***“It's a real privilege to use all the experience I have in research and apply that to a disease I really understand. I'd like to thank everyone who's donated for helping make that possible.” - David***



## “FROM ALL OF MY FAMILY, THANK YOU!”

- Mark, whose wife Amber is living with MS

My wife was my high school sweetheart, so when Amber was diagnosed with MS we were both terrified. We worried what it would mean for our lives, our futures and for our kids.

Since then, Amber has been amazing. She's worked hard to take control of her health, and I've done whatever I can to help. But we wouldn't have been able to do it alone and I'm so thankful for the support we've received from the MS community.

I'm also grateful for the research happening in Australia, because one day we may be able to reverse Amber's disease. That would be amazing – it would give us our old life back and change the future for our family.

## TOGETHER, AS A COMMUNITY, WE CAN DEFEAT MS

**MS is a complex, unpredictable disease and no two cases are the same.**

In the last 10 years, I have seen astounding progress that makes me optimistic about the future.

New treatments have been developed, more are in the pipeline, and I believe it's only a matter of time before we can stop MS and reverse its effects.

That progress has only been possible because researchers, clinicians, people with MS and the entire MS community have worked together.

*Please donate to MS Research Australia today*

There is a lot of work left to do. More Australians are diagnosed with the disease every year and it still limits their lives and their futures. I truly believe that the progress we've made so far shows that together, we can end MS.

Please join me and help make that happen.

*J. Morahan*

**Dr Julia Morahan**  
Head of Research



**MS Research Australia**

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MS Research Australia is the research arm of MS Australia



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