

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25



RESEARCH  
ADVOCACY  
CURE



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>About MS Australia</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chair Report</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CEO Report</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Research</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>PLATYPUS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Advocacy</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Education &amp; Awareness</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Partnerships &amp; Fundraising</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Finance</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Board of Directors &amp; Patrons</b>	<b>28</b>

# ABOUT MS AUSTRALIA



MS Australia is Australia's national multiple sclerosis (MS) not-for-profit organisation that empowers researchers to identify ways to treat, prevent and cure MS, seeks sustained and systemic policy change via advocacy, and acts as the national champion for Australia's community of people affected by MS.

MS Australia represents and collaborates with its state and territory MS Member Organisations, people with MS, their carers, families and friends, and various national and international bodies to:

- Fund, coordinate, educate and advocate for MS research as part of the worldwide effort to solve MS
- Provide the latest evidence-based information and resources
- Help meet the needs of people affected by MS

## What is multiple sclerosis?

MS is the most common acquired chronic neurological disease affecting young adults, often diagnosed between the ages of 20 to 40 and, in Australia, affects three times more women than men. As yet, there is no cure. There is no known single cause of MS, but many genetic and environmental factors have been shown to contribute to its development.

In MS, the body's own immune system mistakenly attacks and damages the fatty material – called myelin – around the nerves. Myelin is important for protecting and insulating nerves so that the electrical messages that the brain sends to the rest of the body, travel quickly and efficiently.

As the myelin breaks down during an MS attack – a process called demyelination – patches of nerves become exposed and then scarred, which renders the nerves unable to communicate messages properly and at risk of subsequent degeneration. This means that the brain cannot 'talk' to other parts of the body, resulting in a range of symptoms that can include a loss of motor function (e.g., walking and hand and arm function, loss of sensation, pain, vision changes and changes to thinking and memory).



**62% of people with MS use a disease modifying therapy (DMT)**



**Nearly 3m people live with MS worldwide**



**More than 37,756 Australians live with MS**



**\$3bn was the estimated cost of MS to the Australian community in 2024**



**Average age of diagnosis is between 20-40 years**



**3 out of 4 Australians diagnosed with MS are women**



**MS affects more young adults than any other acquired chronic neurological disease**



**There were 139 Australians living with MS per 100k people in 2024, up from 104 in 2017**



GEORGE PAMPACOS | CHAIR

## CHAIR REPORT

I was appointed Chair of MS Australia in November 2024, and it is a privilege to step into this role at an important time for the organisation and the MS community.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to recognise and thank the former Chair Des Graham for his valuable contribution to MSA during this reporting period, and to acknowledge Des' distinguished leadership of MSA and the broader MS community over many years.

Des led the organisation with dedication, integrity and a deep commitment to improving the lives of people living with MS. It has been my privilege to work closely with him and with fellow Directors since joining the Board in 2020.

This role carries a deeply personal connection for me. My mum was diagnosed with MS when I was a teenager, a close friend received his diagnosis in his 20s, and my uncle later passed away with MS. These experiences have shaped a long-standing commitment to the MS community, first through my involvement with MSWA and now as Chair of MSA.

The Board's role is to guide MSA's long-term direction on behalf of the MS community, grounded in a clear vision of a world without MS.

Throughout the year, the Board focused on providing continuity during the leadership transition, maintaining clarity of strategic direction, and ensuring the organisation remains accountable, sustainable and responsive to the needs of people living with MS, now and into the future.

As part of this responsibility, the Board commenced a review of MSA's research program to ensure it remains aligned with the evolving needs of the MS community and positioned to support the next phase of discovery and progress.

As Chair, I am committed to working closely with my fellow Directors and the Chief Executive Officer to support MSA's long-term success. This includes overseeing strategy at a high level, maintaining sound governance practices, and ensuring the organisation remains focused on improving outcomes for people living with MS.

I am encouraged by the depth of MSA's national and international partnerships, which support collaboration, shared learning and alignment with global priorities in MS research and advocacy.

During the year, MSA was honoured to be supported by our new Patron, Sam Mostyn, continuing the tradition of patronage established by her predecessor. Her Excellency welcomed the MS community to Government House for World MS Day, and her warmth and genuine commitment to the cause made the occasion especially meaningful for all involved.

I thank my fellow Board members for their dedication and contribution throughout the year, and I look forward to continuing this work together as we advance the interests of the MS community we serve.



MSA Chair George Pampacos with Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Patron of MS Australia, World MS Day 2025, Government House, Canberra.

MSA Chair George Pampacos presenting the 2024 MS Research Award to Professor Jeannette Lechner-Scott.



MSA Chair George Pampacos chairs a panel discussion at MSA's inaugural research symposium with Professor Ruth Anne Marrie (Dalhousie University, Canada), Professor Bruce Taylor (Menzies Institute for Medical Research), Dr Sarah Flaim (LEEP member and person living with MS) and Nicolette Murphy (person living with MS), University of Sydney, NSW.



ROHAN GREENLAND | CEO

# CEO REPORT

The 2024-25 year was one of progress, connection and momentum across MS Australia's focus, spanning research, advocacy, education and community engagement.

It was also a year of leadership transition. In November 2024, George Pampacos was appointed Chair of MSA, following the extraordinary contribution of former Chair Des Graham. We thank Des for his commitment, vision and many years of service to the MS community. I look forward to building on his legacy and working with our hard-working Board members, and particularly the Chair, George, and Deputy Chair Vicki Thomson.

In 2024-25, MSA marked its 20th year of MS research funding, a significant milestone reflecting two decades of sustained investment in prevention, improved treatments and progress toward a cure. During the year, MSA invested more than \$5.7m in MS research, supporting a record 38 research projects

nationwide. This investment continues to deepen understanding of MS and improve outcomes for people living with the condition.

MSA played a leading role in advancing MS research nationally and internationally. The inaugural Frontiers in MS Research Symposium showcased the depth of talent and collaboration across the MS research community. International partnerships, including with MS Canada, also progressed the Pathways to Cures roadmap, with a focus on ultra-early detection and intervention to prevent irreversible damage.

Advocacy remained a central focus throughout the year. Through the Neurological Alliance Australia of which I have had the privilege of chairing for the last four years, MSA worked alongside other neurological organisations to progress the Blueprint for a National Action Plan for Neurological Conditions, calling for stronger data, better care coordination and targeted investment to meet the growing number of Australians living with neurological conditions.



MSA CEO Rohan Greenland presents the 2024 MS Advocacy Award to Marianne Gaul AM in Tamworth, NSW.



Keen runner The Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP, Assistant Minister for Productivity, Competition, Charities and Treasury with MSA CEO, Rohan Greenland, supporting The May 50K 2025, Parliament House, Canberra.

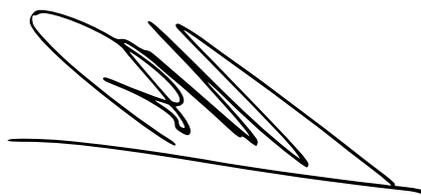
Ahead of the 2025 federal election, advocacy efforts also centred on strengthening long-term investment in medical research, including improved access to the Medical Research Future Fund and the case for a dedicated neurological mission. We continued to advocate for improved access to MS Nurse care and for infrastructure that supports earlier detection and prevention.

Ensuring people living with MS remain at the centre of decision-making is fundamental to our approach. Our research and advocacy priorities survey and the ongoing work of the Lived Experience Expert Panel informed research priorities, policy positions, submissions and communications, while public education initiatives supported greater understanding of MS across the community.

Engagement across the year was reflected in participation across a range of activities. Thousands took part in The May 50K, raising more than \$2.13 million for MS research. Others came together to mark World MS Day and the launch of *Living Well with MS* at Government House in Canberra, with the support of our co-Patron, the Governor-General, Ms Sam Mostyn AC.

During the year, I was appointed as a Trustee of the Multiple Sclerosis International Federation. This appointment strengthens MSA's contribution to global collaboration and ensures the Australian MS community is represented in international discussions shaping the future of MS research, policy and care.

As we look to the year ahead, MSA remains focused on funding world-leading research, advocating for systemic reform and amplifying the voices of people living with and affected by MS. With the dedication of our Board, team, researchers, partners and community, and with the continued support of our Member Organisations and donors, we move forward with confidence and purpose toward a world free from MS.



New MS International Federation CEO Dr Lydia Makaroff and MSA CEO, Rohan Greenland in London, UK.

MSA CEO Rohan Greenland with cast and crew of 'Take My Hand' - Blake Northfield, Claire Jenz, John Raftopoulos and Radha Mitchell, at the Sydney gala screening, Palace Moore Park, NSW.

# RESEARCH

MS Australia's research program supports high-quality research that advances understanding, treatment, and prevention of multiple sclerosis. Through funding, collaboration, and national leadership, we invest in research that responds to the priorities of the MS community and accelerates progress toward better outcomes.



**More than \$5.7 million awarded to 38 new research grants**



**Launch of EBV in MS National Collaborative Platform, uniting more than 40 Australian researchers**



**Clinical trials STOP-MS and FIRMS-EBV launched**



**MS Australia and MS Canada - joint leadership on the Global Prevention and Early Detection Initiative**



**Inaugural Frontiers in MS Research Symposium unites MS community and sector experts**



**Living Well with MS guides launched, spotlighting 11 evidence-based modifiable lifestyle factors**



**Comprehensive research program review underway to meet the evolving needs of the MS community**

MS Australia's research program continues to drive progress toward prevention, better treatments, and ultimately, a cure for multiple sclerosis. Through national and global collaboration, we are investing in bold science that improves lives today and accelerates discoveries for tomorrow.



Dr Monokesh Sen, MS Australia-funded researcher at the Charles Perkins Centre, University of Sydney.

“

**Together we are investigating innovative treatments and the development of vaccines, with the ultimate hope that this effort brings us closer to the goal of preventing MS.**

**DR JULIA MORAHAN**  
DEPUTY CEO, MS AUSTRALIA

”

In 2024–25, MS Australia invested more than \$5.7 million to support 38 new research projects across Australia. This included 35 projects funded through our major grant round – the most ever awarded in a single round. These projects span every stage of the research journey, from understanding the biology of MS to improving quality of life. With the support of MSWA, whose additional \$2.4 million investment enabled 10 extra projects to begin, this funding reinforces our commitment to building a world-leading MS research community.

Building on this research investment, a pivotal step in MS Australia's mission to address the root causes of MS was the launch of the EBV in MS National Collaborative Platform, which unites more than 40 Australian researchers to investigate the role of Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) in triggering MS and driving disease progression. This national effort complements two new clinical trials, STOP-MS

and FIRMS-EBV, which are testing whether antiviral drugs could slow progression or reduce fatigue in people with MS.

Extending our global leadership, MS Australia co-led the Global Prevention and Early Detection Initiative with MS Canada, a \$7.5 million partnership to advance research into early risk factors and prevention. This builds on the refined Pathways to Cures Roadmap, which defines the global priorities for stopping MS, restoring function and preventing the disease altogether.

To continue fostering collaboration across MS research, our inaugural Frontiers in MS Research symposium brought together

“

**I am incredibly thankful to be awarded this incubator grant, which will enable us to work towards addressing social factors like employment, housing, and social inclusion in MS care.**

**ISABELLE WELD-BLUNDELL**  
RESEARCHER  
MS AUSTRALIA GRANT RECIPIENT

”



MSA Deputy CEO Dr Julia Morahan, Dr Jo Gamble (lead author *Living Well with MS* guide) and Deanna Renee, LEEP member, World MS Day 2025, Government House, Canberra.

leading experts and members of the MS community to advance the Pathways to Cures research strategy. The event explored global progress in MS prevention, early detection and symptom management, highlighting how cross-disciplinary collaboration is accelerating pathways to cures.

Translating MS research into real-world impact, the new *Living Well with MS* guide was developed in partnership with researchers, health professionals, clinicians and people living with MS. The guide translates the latest evidence on 11 modifiable lifestyle factors, including physical activity, diet, sleep, stress management and vitamin D, into clear, trustworthy information to help people living with MS make informed choices about their health and wellbeing.

With more than two decades of progress behind us, MS Australia's research program continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of the MS community. A comprehensive

MSA Chair George Pampacos opens the inaugural Frontiers in MS Research symposium, The University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Centre, NSW.

MSA Head of Research Dr Tennille Luker and Deputy CEO Dr Julia Morahan, World MS Day 2025, Government House, Canberra.

“

**MS Australia has supported every stage of my research career, enabling work that ultimately benefits people living with MS**

**DR JESSICA FLETCHER**  
RESEARCHER  
MS AUSTRALIA GRANT RECIPIENT

”

review of the program commenced during the year to ensure it remains innovative, collaborative and focused on outcomes that make a tangible difference. Together with our partners and supporters, we are building a stronger foundation for the discoveries that will shape the future of MS research and care.



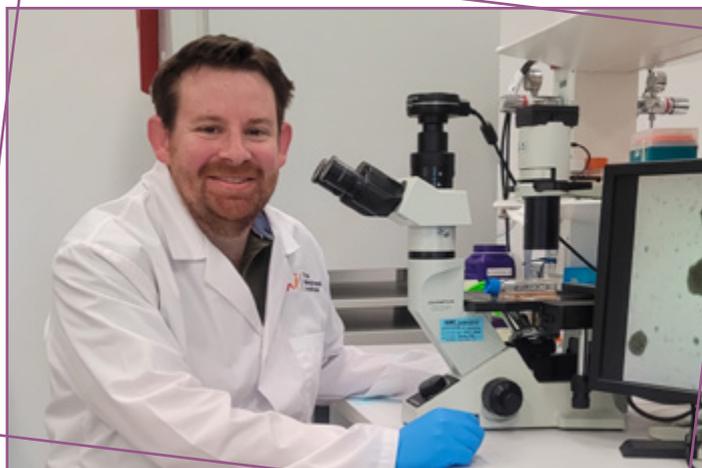
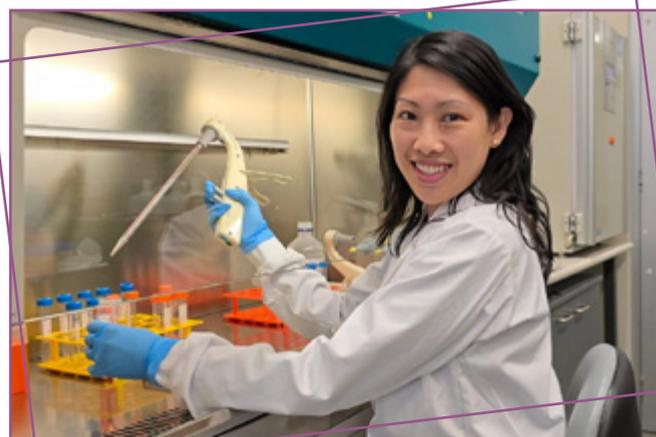
# CASE STUDIES

## CASE STUDY 1

### Major grant round funds record number of MS research projects

In 2024–25, MS Australia funded 35 new research projects through its major grant round – the largest number ever awarded in a single round – totalling more than \$5.7 million. This included 10 additional projects made possible through \$2.4 million in extra funding from MSWA.

The studies encompass all MS research priorities, ranging from understanding the causes and prevention to developing more effective treatments and potential cures through cell repair and regeneration. Selected through a rigorous external review process overseen by the Research Management Council, every project delivers high-quality science with tangible benefits for people living with MS. This expanded round accelerates discoveries that will improve treatment, care and quality of life.



Top to bottom: Dr Jessica Fletcher, Menzies Institute for Medical Research; Dr Vivien Li, The University of Melbourne and Dr Grant Parnell, The University of Sydney, MS Australia-funded researchers.

## CASE STUDY 2

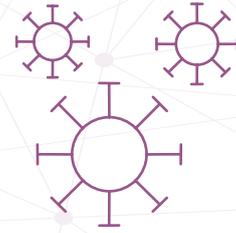
### Uniting Epstein-Barr virus research to prevent and treat MS

MS Australia launched the national EBV in MS Collaborative Platform, uniting more than 40 leading researchers and clinicians to better understand the link between Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) and multiple sclerosis.

The Platform coordinates national projects, builds an EBV biobank, and supports the development of vaccines and antiviral treatments that could one day prevent MS. Two related Australian clinical trials – STOP-MS and FIRMS-EBV – are testing whether antiviral medications can slow the progression

Launch of the national EBV in MS Collaborative Platform at the inaugural Frontiers in MS Research symposium, The University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Centre, NSW.

or reduce fatigue. By coordinating national expertise, the Platform enhances Australia's leadership in MS research and lays the groundwork for future prevention efforts.

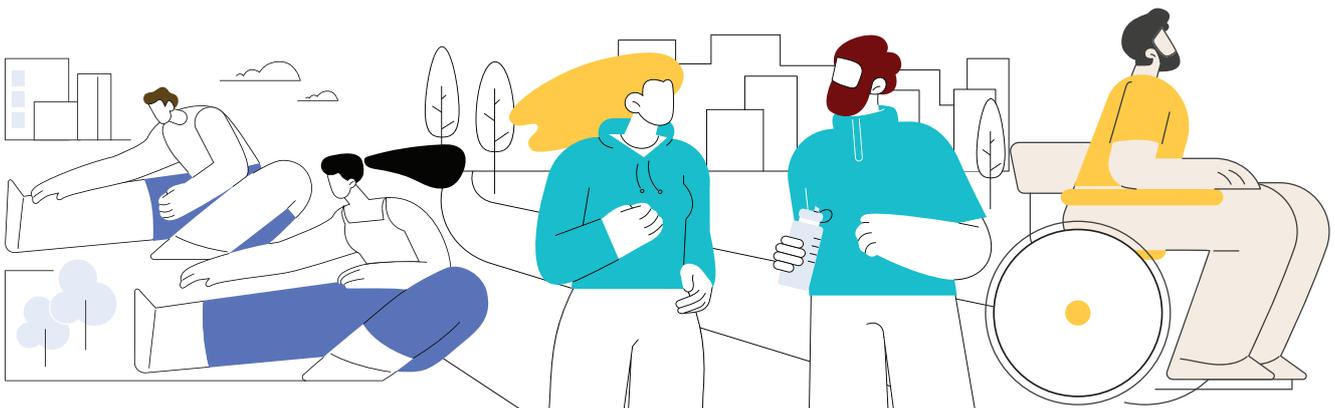


## CASE STUDY 3

### Living well with MS – turning evidence into empowerment

New research found that while most Australians with MS want to make lifestyle changes, many struggle to find reliable guidance. MS Australia responded with *Living Well with MS*, a comprehensive, evidence-based guide developed in collaboration with researchers, health professionals, and the MS community.

The resource translates research on 11 lifestyle factors – including physical activity, nutrition, sleep and vitamin D – into clear, practical strategies. Launched on World MS Day 2025, *Living Well with MS* empowers people to make informed choices and take an active role in their health.





## PLATYPUS: Accelerating treatments for progressive MS

Progressive MS remains one of the greatest challenges in MS research, with limited treatment options available to slow disability progression. To help address this, MS Australia is supporting PLATYPUS, the Australian extension of a revolutionary clinical trial based in the United Kingdom (UK) called OCTOPUS, designed to accelerate the testing of potential treatments for progressive MS.

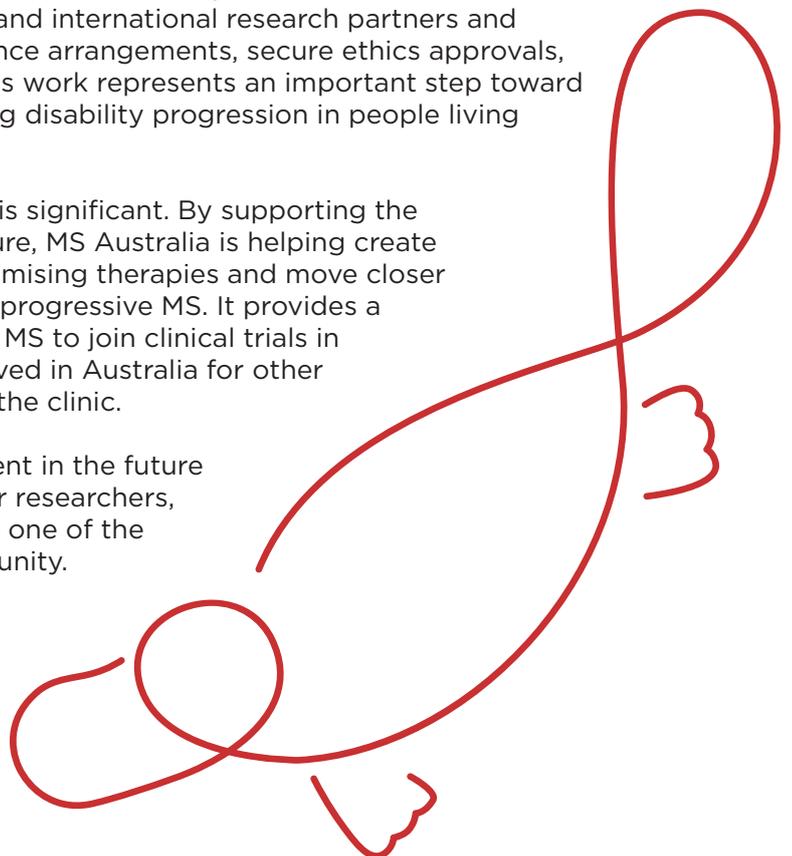
The OCTOPUS trial is funded by the UK MS Society. In Australia, MS Australia and MS Western Australia (MSWA) have provided funding to support the extension and coordination of the trial in Australia.

PLATYPUS, short for PLatform Adaptive Trial for remYelination and neuroProtection in mUltiple Sclerosis, uses a multi-arm, multi-stage clinical trial design that allows researchers to test multiple potential treatments within a single coordinated program. Instead of evaluating one therapy at a time, this approach enables several treatments to be assessed simultaneously, helping researchers identify promising therapies more efficiently.

During the year, significant progress was made in establishing the foundations of the platform. MS Australia worked with national and international research partners and clinical centres to establish national governance arrangements, secure ethics approvals, and prepare trial sites across the country. This work represents an important step toward enabling new clinical studies aimed at slowing disability progression in people living with MS.

For the MS community, the potential impact is significant. By supporting the development of this national trial infrastructure, MS Australia is helping create new opportunities for researchers to test promising therapies and move closer to treatments that can change the course of progressive MS. It provides a rare opportunity for people with progressive MS to join clinical trials in Australia. By testing therapies already approved in Australia for other conditions, we aim to accelerate the path to the clinic.

PLATYPUS represents an important investment in the future of MS research in Australia, bringing together researchers, clinicians and people living with MS to tackle one of the most urgent challenges facing the MS community.



# ADVOCACY

MS Australia's advocacy focuses on improving systems, services, and policy settings that affect people living with multiple sclerosis and other neurological conditions. By working with government, clinicians, researchers, and people with lived experience, we seek to address gaps in care, access, and support across the health and disability landscape.



**First-ever treatment for NMOSD listed on the PBS supported by MS Australia advocacy**



**Expanded prescribing rights for MS medications granted to nurse practitioners following MS Australia advocacy**



**'Our Nurses, Our Future' report published on International Nurses Day 2025**



**Federal Election advocacy on behalf of people living with MS and other neurological conditions**



**Neurological Alliance Australia (NAA) increased membership to 40**



**Lived Experience Expert Panel (LEEP) expands to 59 members**



**'The Price is NOT Right!' campaign raised concerns about the NDIS Pricing Review**

Team MS Australia and friends join Dr Andrew Leigh MP, Assistant Minister for Productivity, Competition, Charities and Treasury, supporting The May 50K, Parliament House, Canberra.



MS Australia advocates for systemic change by influencing government, strengthening policy and improving access to quality care, research and support for people living with MS. In 2024–25, these efforts achieved significant progress across government, health and community sectors.

A major milestone was the listing of the first treatment for neuromyelitis optica spectrum disorder (NMOSD) on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), making this life-changing therapy more affordable. NMOSD can appear similar to MS early on, but it is a distinct immune-mediated disease that requires different treatment and management.

Further strengthening access to treatments, MS Australia supported a submission to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee recommending that nurse practitioners be authorised to prescribe certain MS medicines under the PBS. The submission drew on findings from our MS Nurse Care in Australia report, which demonstrated that access to MS nurses leads to better health outcomes and slower disease progression. Expanding prescribing rights would improve access to treatment, particularly for people in regional and remote areas.

Continuing this focus on the MS nursing workforce, MS Australia partnered with MS Nurses Australasia to release the Our Nurses, Our Future report on International Nurses Day 2025. The report highlighted the vital role of MS nurses and called for greater investment in the workforce, including more funded positions, a national strategy and enhanced education pathways.

“

**We are incredibly grateful for the ongoing support MS Australia is providing to MS Nurses and our roles.**

**TIM O'MALEY**  
MS NURSE PRACTITIONER  
MEMBER, MS AUSTRALIA MS NURSES  
WORKING GROUP

”



MSA's 2024-25 Pre-Budget Submission called on the Australian Government to commit to priority actions to improve outcomes for the MS community.

Ahead of the 2025 Federal Election, MS Australia continued to pursue the priorities that matter most to the MS community. Our Pre-Budget Submission and Budget Response called for national investment in MS research, workforce capacity and stronger supports for people with disability and those ageing with MS.

As part of this election advocacy, and in our role as lead organisation of the Neurological Alliance Australia (NAA), representing more than seven million Australians living with neurological conditions, MS Australia coordinated the NAA's election platform and released an Election Scorecard comparing major party commitments.



**There is strength in numbers. Speaking with one voice with a common and focused agenda, our work with the Neurological Alliance Australia gives MS Australia an even stronger voice and greater influence.**

**ROHAN GREENLAND**  
CEO, MS AUSTRALIA



**The sense of purpose and fulfilment is wonderful, and volunteering with the Lived Experience Expert Panel gives me the opportunity to make a meaningful impact in the MS community.**

**JULIE**  
LEEP MEMBER  
PERSON LIVING WITH MS



MS Australia also responded to the 2024-25 NDIS Pricing Review, raising concerns that reduced therapy pricing will limit access to essential supports for people living with MS and other disabilities. We have engaged with the NDIA and representatives from the government and opposition to review these changes, which place added pressure on MS Australia's Member Organisations that already subsidise critical services.

To further strengthen the role of lived experience across MS Australia's work, the Lived Experience Expert Panel (LEEP) expanded to 59 members. The panel brings together people with MS and carers from diverse backgrounds whose insights shape MS Australia's advocacy, policy and research initiatives. LEEP members also contribute their expertise to external organisations seeking to meaningfully involve people with lived experience in their projects and partnerships.



MSA LEEP member Vanessa Fanning (seated third from the right) and Deputy CEO Dr Julia Morahan (top right) share their experience and expertise with the Sanofi Leadership Team, during The May 50K 2025.

# CASE STUDIES



## CASE STUDY 1

### Expansion of the Lived Experience Expert Panel (LEEP)



MSA LEEP member Deanna Renee speaking at the launch of the *Living Well with MS* guide, World MS Day 2025, Government House, Canberra.

The Lived Experience Expert Panel (LEEP) expanded to 59 members in 2024-25, strengthening the voice of lived experience across all areas of MS Australia's activities.

The panel brings together people living with MS and carers from across Australia who contribute their insights to guide research, advocacy, education and awareness initiatives.

Panel members represent a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences, ensuring that MS Australia's programs and priorities reflect the real needs of the MS community.

LEEP members also collaborated with external organisations across health, disability and medicines, sharing their expertise to enhance the design and impact of projects and partnerships.

## CASE STUDY 2

### Our Nurses, Our Future Caring for MS Nurses

On International Nurses Day 2025, MS Australia and MS Nurses Australasia released *Our Nurses, Our Future*, a report highlighting the essential role of MS nurses in improving treatment, care and quality of life for people living with MS.

The report revealed that access to MS nurses leads to better health outcomes and slower disease progression, but that too few positions are currently funded to meet demand.

It called for greater investment in the MS nursing workforce, including a national strategy, more funded roles, and expanded education pathways.

By showcasing the vital contribution of MS nurses and advocating for systemic change, the initiative has strengthened the case for workforce investment and reinforced the value of nursing expertise in delivering high-quality, person-centred care.



The *Our Nurses, Our Future* report called for greater investment in the MS nursing workforce, including a national strategy, more funded roles, and expanded education pathways.



MSA's The Price Is Not Right advocacy campaign was in response to the concerns around the 2024-25 NDIS Pricing Review.



### CASE STUDY 3

## Budgets and Elections Advancing national policy for people with MS

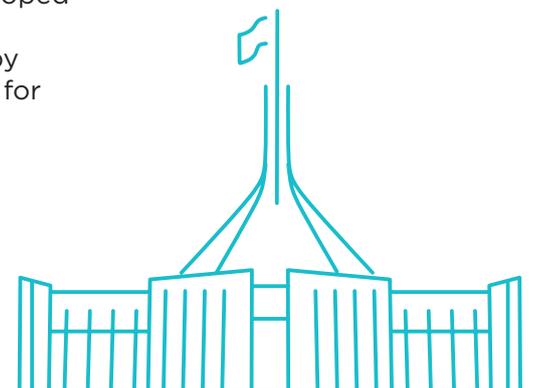
With 2025 as a Federal Election year, MS Australia strengthened its advocacy through coordinated Budget and election engagement.

The Pre-Budget Submission set out five priorities: a National MS Biobank, a Neurological Health Research Mission within the Medical Research Future Fund, expanded access to MS nurses, improved NDIS supports and implementation of aged care reforms for people living with disability.

Ahead of the election, MS Australia called on all political parties to adopt these priorities and coordinated the Neurological Alliance Australia's election platform and scorecard to highlight commitments across the neurological sector.

Following the election and release of the 2025-26 Federal Budget, MS Australia analysed key measures to help the MS community understand their implications.

During this period, MS Australia released *The Price Is Not Right*, an official response to the NDIS Pricing Review developed with Member Organisations and allied health groups. The statement raised concerns about reduced therapy pricing and its effect on access to essential supports for people with disability, including people with MS.



# EDUCATION & AWARENESS

MS Australia's education and awareness work focuses on improving understanding of multiple sclerosis across the community, from people newly diagnosed to health professionals and the broader public. Through trusted resources, storytelling, and national moments of engagement, we support earlier recognition, informed decision-making, and a stronger connection to the MS community.



**'What is MS?' video and brochure raise awareness in GP clinics across the country**



**Take My Hand feature film partnership extends to national release and Q&A screenings**



**Celebrated World MS Day 2025 at Government House with the MS community**



**Expanded MS Australia Awards include Research and Advocacy Awards alongside the John Studdy Award**



**The Raw Nerve Podcast marks its 50th episode**



**Crisis Toolkit resource released to support people with MS during emergencies**

MS Australia informs, connects and celebrates the MS community through national campaigns, storytelling and practical resources. In 2024-25, these initiatives strengthened understanding of MS, amplified lived experience and helped more Australians access trusted, evidence-based information and support.

With the prevalence of multiple sclerosis (MS) on the rise in Australia, MS Australia ran a national campaign to feature its What is MS? explainer video and accompanying brochure in GP clinics across the country. Designed to demystify and explain a complex, often invisible disease, the resources educate both the general public and people living with MS, particularly those newly diagnosed, about the causes, different types and common symptoms of a condition that currently has no cure.

“

**I think people with MS need to have a voice, and to share their stories. You feel heard again.**

**CLAIRE JENSZ**  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, TAKE MY HAND  
PERSON LIVING WITH MS

”



MSA's 'What is MS?' video and brochure raised awareness in GP clinics across the country by demystifying and explaining a complex, often invisible disease.

MS Australia collaborated with writer and executive producer Claire Jenz and her husband, writer and director John Raftopoulos, on the *Take My Hand* film partnership, recognising early on the project's profound portrayal of MS and its potential to spark meaningful awareness. Inspired by Claire's lived experience with MS, the feature follows Laura, played by Radha Mitchell, as she navigates love, loss and resilience while living with the condition. The partnership included national Q&A screenings and online engagement, helping audiences connect with the story and deepen their understanding of MS.

World MS Day 2025 brought the community together at Government House, hosted by Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of Australia, to launch *Living Well with MS*, a new wellness guide that turns research and lived experience into practical advice for everyday health and wellbeing. The event brought together people with MS, researchers, health professionals, politicians, and representatives from government and industry, reflecting a shared commitment to improving the lives of all affected by MS.



MSA Patron Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of Australia, joins the community in a chair yoga session on World MS Day 2025, Government House, Canberra.

The 2024 MS Australia Awards expanded to include two new categories, the MS Research Award and the MS Advocacy Award, alongside the long-standing John Studdy Award. Professor Jeannette Lechner-Scott received the MS Research Award, Marianne Gaul AM received the MS Advocacy Award, and Lynda Whitton received the John Studdy Award. Each was recognised for outstanding contributions to the MS community.

During the year, MS Australia marked the 50th episode of The Raw Nerve, our official podcast and conversation space for all things MS. The podcast features news and discussions on the latest MS research, treatments and advocacy efforts, along with candid interviews with people living with MS, carers, researchers and clinicians, fostering connection and understanding across the community.



MSA Chair George Pampacos with 2024 John Studdy Award Recipient Lynda Whitton, MSA CEO Melanie Kiely and MSA Chair Horst Bemmerl, Bunbury, WA.



Former MSA Chair Associate Professor Des Graham reflects on a decade of leadership and service to the MS community on The Raw Nerve Podcast, 2024.



**I love the chats, the guests, the insights. I always find it fascinating to listen to the podcast.**

**CASSIDY KRYGGER**  
ACTOR, SCREENWRITER & PRODUCER  
THE RAW NERVE PODCAST GUEST  
PERSON LIVING WITH MS



To help the MS community prepare for unexpected challenges, the Crisis Toolkit was developed through the MS Australia-funded Crisis Resilience in MS project, in collaboration with the Australian Red Cross, MS community stakeholders and researchers from Murdoch University and the University of Melbourne. The resource responds to community concerns about how crises such as bushfires and the pandemic affect people with MS and provides practical guidance to help people with disability or chronic health conditions prepare for and manage emergencies.



**This MS Australia website is a direct response to meet the needs of the MS community.**

**PROFESSOR YVONNE LEARMONTH**  
MS AUSTRALIA-FUNDED RESEARCHER, CRISIS TOOLKIT



# CASE STUDIES

## CASE STUDY 1

### Take My Hand – Bringing MS to the big screen

MS Australia partnered with Take My Hand, a powerful Australian feature film inspired by the real-life experiences of executive producer Claire Jenz and her husband, writer and director John Raftopoulos.

The film tells the story of Laura, a spirited woman whose life is changed by an MS diagnosis, exploring love, resilience and the strength found through connection. Through its heartfelt storytelling, Take My Hand shines a light on the realities of MS while offering a message of hope and understanding.

MS Australia supported the film's national Q&A screening program and hosted an online hub featuring behind-the-scenes content and interviews with the filmmakers.



MSA CEO Rohan Greenland addresses the audience at the 'Take My Hand' Melbourne gala launch, 2024 (photo credit: Andrew Hobbs).

The partnership brought audiences closer to the lived experience of MS while raising awareness about the importance of early diagnosis. The collaboration demonstrates the power of authentic storytelling to shift perceptions and foster a deeper understanding of MS in the broader community.



The MSA Research Team attend the 'Take My Hand' Sydney gala launch, 2024 (photo credit: Mitchell Ferris).



Writer and Director John Raftopoulos speaking at the 'Take My Hand' Melbourne gala launch, 2024 (photo credit: Andrew Hobbs).

## CASE STUDY 2

### MS Australia Awards – Celebrating extraordinary people in the MS community

The 2024 MS Australia Awards celebrated three remarkable people whose contributions have strengthened and inspired the MS community.

Bunbury advocate Lynda Whitton received the prestigious John Studdy Award for over 30 years of leadership, advocacy and fundraising. Professor Jeannette Lechner-Scott was honoured with the inaugural MS Research Award for her groundbreaking work advancing treatment and care. Marianne Gaul AM, a retired nurse and dedicated volunteer, received the MS Advocacy Award for her compassionate peer support and leadership within the MS Plus network.



Top: Marianne Gaul AM, recipient of the 2024 MS Advocacy Award; bottom left: Lynda Whitton, recipient of the 2024 John Studdy Award; bottom right: Professor Jeannette Lechner-Scott, recipient of the 2024 MS Research Award.



Expanded in 2024 to include two new award categories, the program recognises the many ways people contribute to the MS community through research, advocacy, volunteering and community leadership.

The awards also reflect MS Australia's commitment to recognising those who drive change and embody the values of the MS community.



## CASE STUDY 3

### Crisis Toolkit – Building resilience and preparedness

Developed through the MS Australia-funded Crisis Resilience in MS project, the Crisis Toolkit provides practical guidance to help people with disability or chronic health conditions prepare for and manage emergencies.

For people living with MS, emergencies such as bushfires, floods or pandemics can disrupt access to healthcare, treatments and support, making preparation even more important.

Created in collaboration with the Australian Red Cross, MS community stakeholders and

researchers from Murdoch University and The University of Melbourne, the resource was shaped by research showing that crises can directly affect the wellbeing and health behaviours of people with MS.

The Crisis Toolkit empowers people to plan ahead, stay connected and protect their health in times of uncertainty, reflecting MS Australia's commitment to translating research and lived experience into resources that strengthen the resilience of the MS community.

# PARTNERSHIPS & FUNDRAISING

In September 2024, we welcomed our Head of Business Development in a new strategic leadership role focusing on diversifying revenue streams across partnerships, philanthropic trusts and foundations and government income to help bolster financial growth for MS research.



**\$2.1m raised for MS research by The May 50K in 2025**



**7,776 participants in The May 50K 2025**



**\$279.50 raised for MS research by the average May 50K participant**



**\$25.5m raised for MS research in Australia since The May 50K launched in 2019**



**More than \$7.8m received from Gifts in Wills**



**More than \$2.1m received from general donations and other fundraising**



**More than \$5.2m for MS research contributed by our state and territory MS Member Organisations**

**“ Coming out of a really bad year, I felt like I needed to do something greater than myself. The May 50K gave me that opportunity. ”**

**ANNE-MAREE O'NEIL**  
THE MAY 50K 2024 TOP FUNDRAISER

## The May 50K

In 2024 - 2025, a strategic focus area for MS Australia's largest annual fundraising campaign for MS research, was corporate growth and awareness. Following MS Australia's appointment as Charity Partner of AmCham's International Women's Day event in Canberra, we were delighted to welcome Canberra Airport and Robert Walters, as new participants. Having identified several loyal fundraisers at Westpac, the team was invited to launch The May 50k 2025 at the Group's Sydney HQ whilst highlighting their #DoubleTheGood workplace giving program to staff. This expanded participation from Westpac staff and created a higher level of awareness of the vital funds necessary for MS research.



MSA CEO Rohan Greenland (red t-shirt) thanked the Canberra Airport Team for their support of The May 50K 2025 and joined them for a special walk across the airport grounds.

## Corporate Partnerships

The support of our corporate partners has been crucial in providing vital funding, in-kind resources, increased public awareness, employee engagement and access to broader networks, all of which accelerate research, develop new treatments and help us move closer to achieving our mission of a World Without MS, far more effectively than they could alone. Long term relationships act as an impact multiplier, enabling us to fund more projects, support more researchers and expand our reach both nationally and globally.

Particular thanks to the following pharmaceutical industry partners for their support in 2024-2025.



MSA Deputy CEO Dr Julia Morahan (second left) and Head of Business Development Sally Cox-Mulvenney (third left) join CHEP Australia, a Brambles company at their May 50K 2025 morning tea, to share why funding for MS research is so vital.



MSA Parliamentary Friends of MS events bring together partners including our generous Trusts and Foundations and the community, to discuss the power of authentic stories in MS and the importance of funding MS research.

## Trusts & Foundations

In 2024 - 2025, we experienced a sharp increase in philanthropic donations, predominantly through Trusts and Foundations. We are profoundly grateful for the collective generosity that makes our vital MS research efforts possible, creating lasting change. Cognisant that many of our donors do not wish to be publicly named, we would like to extend our thanks to you all for your ongoing belief in our work.

# FINANCE

MS Australia's financial management is focused on ensuring funds are used responsibly and transparently to support our purpose. We prioritise directing resources towards research, advocacy, and programs that improve outcomes for people living with multiple sclerosis, while maintaining strong governance and long-term financial sustainability.



**37% of MS Australia income received from our state and territory MS Member Organisations**



**\$8.2m spent on MS research**



**68% of expenditure spent on MS research program**



**20% of expenditure spent on Advocacy**



**\$1m income from investments**



**Total income \$17.1m**

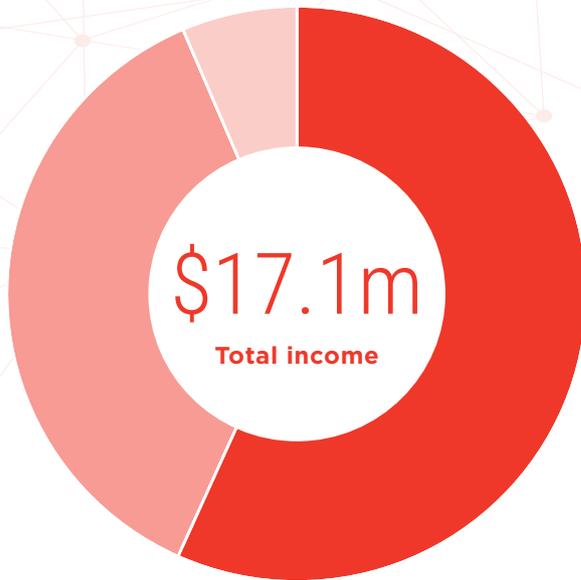


**MS Australia employed 23 staff**

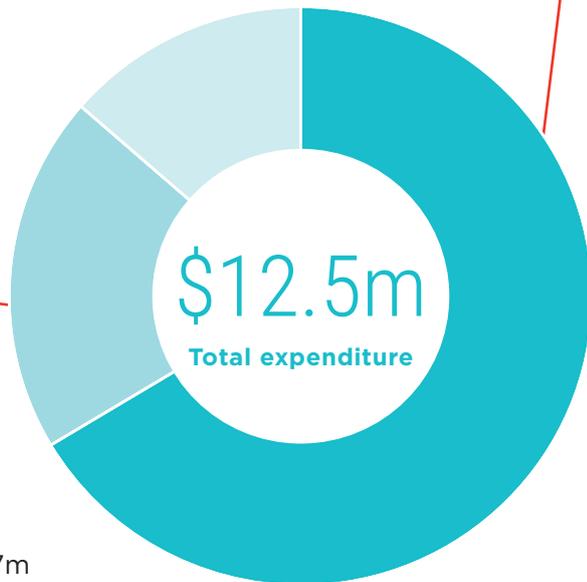
MSA-funded researcher Drishya Mainali from The University of Sydney, NSW.



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY



- Donations and bequests - \$9.7m
- Other income - \$6.3m
- Investments - \$1.1m



- Research and programs - \$8.3m
- People and staffing - \$2.5m
- Operations and governance - \$1.7m

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors hold overall responsibility for the strategic direction of Australian multiple sclerosis (MS) research initiatives.



**George Pampacos**  
Chair



**Vicki Thomson**  
Vice Chair



**Horst Bemmerl**  
Director



**Sharlene Brown**  
Director



**Maureen Lawlor**  
Director



**Bronwyn Rout**  
Director



**Jeannette Lechner-Scott**  
Director



**Shaun Treacy**  
Director



**Corrine Habel**  
Director

# PATRONS

## **Sam Mostyn AC**

Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Patron of MS Australia.



## **Simon McKeon AO**

Simon McKeon AO, 2011 Australian of the Year and former Chancellor of Monash University, is the Patron and Life Governor of MS Australia.



RESEARCH  
ADVOCACY  
CURE

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AUSTRALIA  
Suite 3.01, 18 Flour Mill Way, Summer Hill NSW 2130  
1300 010 158  
[info@msaustralia.org.au](mailto:info@msaustralia.org.au)  
[www.msaustralia.org.au](http://www.msaustralia.org.au)