



**MS MEGA**  
CHALLENGE



**YOUR  
GUIDE TO  
FUNDRAISING**

[msmegachallenge.org.au](http://msmegachallenge.org.au)



# Welcome to the MS Mega Challenge

Your participation means you are now part of a strong legacy that started in 2001 by Paralympic Champion and MS Ambassador, Carol Cooke, AM. Since then, an incredible community of participants, supporters, donors and volunteers, have come together to raise over \$11 million to support people living with multiple sclerosis.

The money raised from our MS Mega Challenge events funds our MS Go for Gold scholarships that enable people living with MS to achieve a dream.

Since our first ever MS Mega Challenge, a 24-hour swim in Fitzroy, almost 1,000 scholarships have now been granted to people living with multiple sclerosis. Dreams that have been achieved are varied from art supplies, to exercise equipment all of which have helped to make a significant difference to those living with multiple sclerosis and their families.

Through your fundraising efforts, you too will be able to join this incredible legacy of making dreams come true for those living with multiple sclerosis as part of the MS Go for Gold Scholarships.

Thank you for taking on the MS Mega Challenge. I trust you will enjoy the experience and energy of the MS Mega Challenge and feel proud of your efforts to help Australians living with multiple sclerosis.

**John Blewonski**  
Chief Executive Officer  
MS Plus

## WHAT IS THE MS MEGA CHALLENGE?

The MS Mega Challenge is a fun 12 or 24 event, where teams of swimmers or paddlers are sponsored by family, friends and colleagues to freestyle, backstroke, butterfly or play pickleball for 12-24 hours, raising vital funds to support people living with MS.

Don't worry, you don't have to participate for 24 hours by yourself. Get a team together and take on our challenge! Swim for 10 minutes or a couple of hours, play for 2 pickleball rounds or 8 - just make sure there is one team member in the pool or 2 picklers on the court at all times. Take part with your friends, family, workplace or sports team, and know you are making a difference to the lives of over 33,000 people living with multiple sclerosis in Australia!

**All ages and abilities are welcome.**

And if you don't have a team, let us know and we'll team you up with some other amazing Mega participants!

That's not all! Mega Challengers are fun for everyone, imagine a swimming carnival for adults! There are fun games and races throughout the whole challenge with on-the-spot prizes to win. With entertainment, music, and the iconic best dressed competition, the MS Mega Challenge truly has something for everyone.

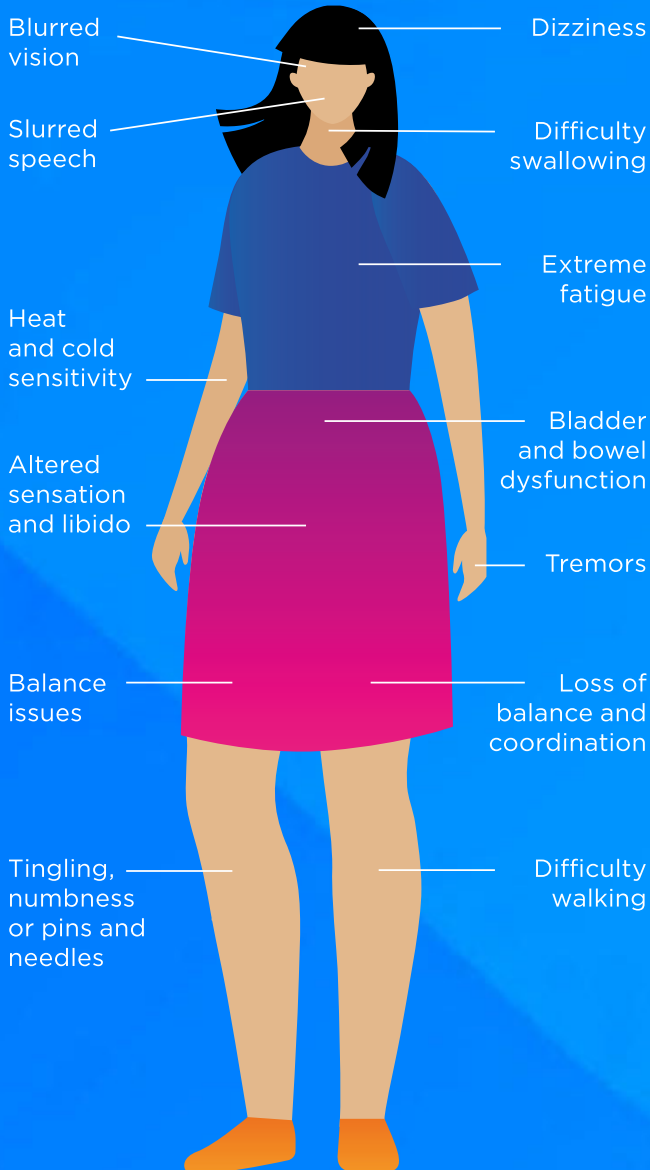
Bring your sleeping bags, snacks, and tunes for an incredible 12 or 24 hours!



Join the  
**MEGA**  
Fun!

# WHAT IS MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS?

## Some symptoms of multiple sclerosis:



Multiple sclerosis is a lifelong disease for which there is no known cure.



1 in 3 Australians will be directly impacted through a diagnosed family member, friend or colleague.



No two cases of multiple sclerosis are identical. The visible and invisible symptoms of multiple sclerosis vary from person to person.



The average age of diagnosis is between 30 years of age, although children as young as 10 have been diagnosed.



Multiple sclerosis attacks the central nervous system (the brain, spinal cord and optic nerves).



Multiple sclerosis is the most common neurological condition among young people.



3 out of 4 people living with multiple sclerosis are women.

# KICK START YOUR FUNDRAISING



Your entry fee covers the cost of running the epic event. With these top tips, you'll be sure to pass the minimum goal of raising **\$150** to help people fight MS.



Share on social media  
@MSMegaChallenge  
#MSMegaChallenge



Ask your employer  
about matched giving



Check out our  
[downloadable resources](#)



Create a Facebook Fundraiser



Set your fundraising goal  
and donate to yourself



Tell us why you're doing  
the challenge on your page



Upload your photo or an avatar



Send emails

## OUR FAVOURITE TIPS

Lead the way and  
make the first  
donation to your  
fundraising page.

Did you know 50% of  
donations come from email?!

We have email templates to  
help you on your fundraising  
portal. Email your friends,  
family and colleagues today.



All your fundraising efforts, however large or small, are appreciated!

## Create a Facebook Fundraiser directly from your fundraising page!

Your Facebook Fundraiser will be linked back to your fundraising page so all donations through Facebook will be recorded. It's a new way to smash your fundraising goal.



### FUN FACT

By creating a Facebook Fundraiser you will raise 15% more!



## ARE YOU WITH US?

It's easy to do! Simply visit your fundraising page and click the "Create a Facebook Fundraiser" button under your name in your fundraising dashboard.

It takes just two clicks to set up!

[SET UP A FACEBOOK FUNDRAISER](#)

# SMASH YOUR FUNDRAISING GOAL WITH THESE FUNDRAISING IDEAS!



## FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD

Whether it's a bake sale, dinner party or a cooking lesson – everyone loves to eat! Feed your friends, family and colleagues in exchange for a donation.



## TRIVIA NIGHT

Everyone loves a quiz night! This could be from the comfort of your living room, with friends online, or down at your local pub!



## BAD HABITS JAR

At home or work, you will be surprised how quickly a bad habits jar can fill up!



## GROOMING CHALLENGE

Ready to change your look? Overdue for a haircut? Now is your chance to use that next grooming session for good!



## SAUSAGE SIZZLE

Who doesn't love a sausage sizzle? Remember to approach your local stores for donations of sausages and bread.



## SILENT AUCTION OR RAFFLE

Get some prizes donated and you can host a silent auction or raffle, online or in person.



## THE DIFFERENCE YOU MAKE

1 in 3 Australians will be directly impacted by multiple sclerosis through a family member, friend or colleague. The uncertainty of what lies ahead after diagnosis can be a difficult experience, and that's why we are here to make sure no one faces MS alone.

### Here's how your support will make a difference:



#### CONNECT - HELPLINE AND SUPPORT CENTRE

The MS Connect team is the first point of contact with the organisation, providing trusted advice and connecting clients with all other relevant services. This year they supported 726 new clients and closed 10,667 cases



#### NURSE ADVISOR - PERSONALISED ADVICE AND REFERRALS

MS Nurses are the go-to for many clients, providing free advice on symptoms and relapse management, medication options and side effects and connecting clients to other supports where required. Our nurses conducted 1,024 telehealth and in person consultations.



#### EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Over 650 people will receive employment support to help them stay in the jobs or to find employment.



#### WEBINARS AND EVENTS

This year MS Plus redeveloped and expanded our education program, with a greater focus on in person learning, delivering over 50 resources, and live education programs.



#### PEER SUPPORT GROUPS - CONNECTION AND BELONGING

Nearly 1,143 new people with MS and their loved ones will find social connection through Plus Peer Support groups, held online, in-person and by phone with 2,712 hours of monthly support.



#### NDIS SUPPORT COORDINATION

Overall, the team provided 47,088 hours of support to clients.

# HERO PROGRAM

We know that the best reward is knowing the difference you're making by fundraising for Australians living with multiple sclerosis. Just to sweeten the deal a little more you can become an MS Hero, where your outstanding fundraising efforts will be recognised.



**THIS IS  
WHERE WE  
CELEBRATE  
YOU!**



*“ I didn't know I was capable of swimming 5km but the mega swim helped motivate me to just keep swimming (as Dory would say). I was so surprised at how easy it was to fundraise. My friends, family and colleagues all jumped in to encourage me and donated generously.”*

## Meet Stephanie



**Stephanie was on a trek in Nepal in 2019 when she experienced facial muscle paralysis. A local Nepalese doctor was quick to recognise that her symptoms were slightly different to Bell’s Palsy, and immediately sent her to get a MRI scan.**

**Stephanie was officially diagnosed with MS in mid-2020, during the covid-19 pandemic. Just after her diagnosis, Stephanie moved to regional Victoria with her husband.**

“I was one of those Melbournians who moved to the country during the pandemic, and wish I had done it sooner! I have fallen in love with the regions!” Stephanie laughs.

“My husband and I holidayed in Mildura a few times and were always impressed by what it had to offer – the river, the food experience, the local wine and of course, Lake Mungo National Park so we are planning on moving to Mildura soon!”

“I joined the local lead-lighting workshop, initially to meet people in my new community, and I was immediately drawn in.”

“I love that lead-lighting is an old craft which has existed for centuries! It is fascinating to see how the design of a lead-light window reflects the art and trends of the day.”

Lead-lighting has since become Stephanie’s therapeutic outlet.

“It allows me to decompress and focus on one thing,” Stephanie explains.

“Stress can aggravate symptoms and cause flareups, so this hobby has become an important tool for managing my own stress, keeping a balanced lifestyle and stopping MS progression in its tracks.”

With her MS Go for Gold Scholarship funds, Stephanie is planning to purchase all the equipment and material she needs to continue lead lighting in Mildura. This is important as her current workshop is in Horsham – more than 300 kilometers and a 3-hour drive away!

I am just enormously grateful to everyone who has either participated in or who have donated to the MS Mega Challenges. The scholarships make a real, meaningful and tangible difference for those living with the disease.

On top of being enormously grateful to the fundraisers at the MS Mega Challenge events, Stephanie turned this support on its head and took part herself in the 2024 Mildura MS Mega Swim.

Not content with just taking part, Stephanie was also the event's Highest Fundraising Individual for 2024, raising an amazing **\$2,403!** This means that Stephanie has funded a Go for Gold scholarship for someone else in 2024 (talk about paying-it-forward!).

Thank you for supporting people like Stephanie to achieve their dreams through the MS Go for Gold Scholarships.

Whether it's being able to attend an exercise program, purchase equipment, undertake a course or travel, the scholarships are awarded to people with multiple sclerosis with a wide range of goals and dreams.

**Your fundraising will change the lives of many people living with multiple sclerosis.**



NEW MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE

## Let others know you are taking part in the MS Mega Challenge

Do you want to rock some branded merchandise to show your friends, family, and colleagues that you are doing the MS Mega Challenge? Don't worry we have you covered!

BUY NOW

From MS Mega Challenge T-shirts, and jumpers to regular MS branded merchandise we have it all!

Check out more of our MEGA merch [here](#)



And make sure to pick up your **Bernard the Bear** - the furry friendly MS ambassador!

# CONNECT WITH US



*“ We look forward to the MS Mega Swim every year. It’s a wonderful opportunity to share my passion for fundraising for MS and love of swimming with the next generation of little swimmers and to show them what a great impact they can have on other people’s lives, no matter how old they are.”*

**Hayley Kalyvas** Wollongong Mega Swim participant

**We love seeing all your Mega Challenge training, fundraising and on the day content!**



Tag @msmegachallenge in your posts and make sure to hashtag your posts with #msmegachallenge and you may see your posts on our social media!

# Double your Donations with Matched Giving!

Ask your employer today!

Many companies have a matched funding program and will match 'dollar for dollar' the amount you or your team fundraise for charity.

## Find out if your workplace has a policy for matched giving?

Your Human Resources Department will know whether your company matches money raised by their employees or has a program that supports the charitable causes of its employees. Tell HR about the distance of the event, the number of members in your team and what you hope to achieve.

## How to ask your workplace?

The most engaging way to ask is to do so in person. If that's not possible, send an email. Have a document detailing the event, your request and the benefits to the company of supporting your team.



## Other options

If your company does not have formal matched funding, they may support you in other ways such as covering your registration fee or enable the team to purchase a custom team kit.

Contact us for any support you need, including a letter to confirm our charitable status, tax-deductible receipts or a letter of thanks.

For matched funding our company details are:  
**MS Plus Ltd ABN 66 004 942 287**



## FAQ'S

### When can I start fundraising?

As soon as you register for the event! Once you have a fundraising page you can kick start your fundraising.

### Where does the money I raise go?

Your valuable fundraising efforts contribute to the MS Go for Gold Scholarship Program and support services offered by MS Plus. The MS Mega Challenge has supported almost 1,000 Go for Gold Scholarship recipients across Australia in fulfilling a dream.

### How can I update my Fundraising Goal?

To update your fundraising goal, you can login to your personal fundraising page and edit your goal.

### How do I bank cash donations?

When collecting cash donation please contact **1300 733 690** to receive an Authority to Fundraise letter and donations register for your donors to receive a tax receipt. Once your donations have been received, receipts will be promptly sent directly to all relevant donors.

[Click here for answers to more top questions](#)



### Fundraising Money Box

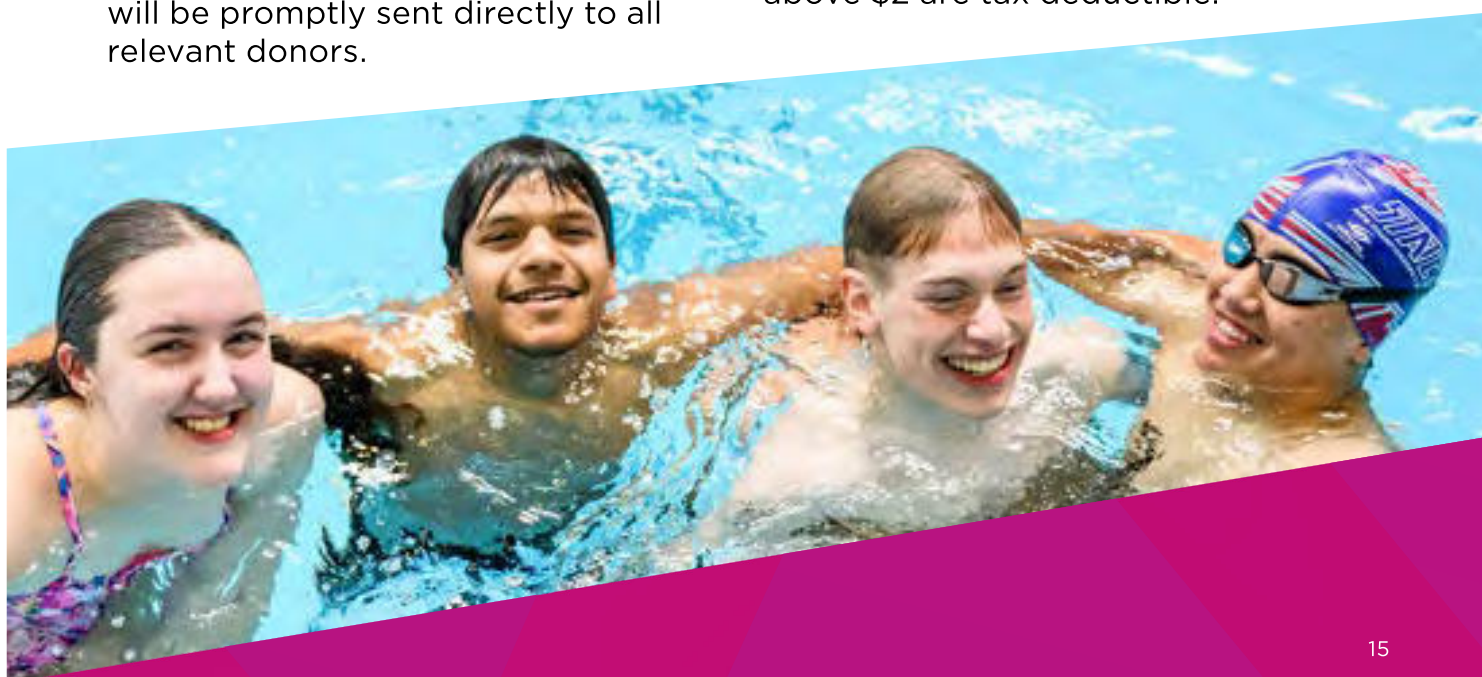
Please contact our team and we will happily post a fundraising box to you to use at a short-term event. Please note cash collected is unable to have a tax receipt issued for it.

### Can I continue fundraising after the event?

Fundraising will continue to be open for 3 weeks following the event date.

### Are donations tax deductible?

All donations received to a fundraiser directly or via your fundraising page above \$2 are tax deductible.



# Questions?

## Contact us

**T** 1300 733 690

**E** [events@msplus.org.au](mailto:events@msplus.org.au)

The MS Plus Events Team have a wealth of knowledge in fundraising and can provide you with the tips, tools and support you need to reach your goal. Be sure to contact the MS Plus Events Team if you require any assistance.

## Ask us about:

- Setting up your team
- Running a successful fundraising event
- MS official merchandise
- Tax deductible receipts
- Matched giving and much more!

