



e-Newsletter

May 2026

Tēnā Koutou Katoa. A warm hello to you all,

Welcome to our May 2026 Edition of MS Voice, your go-to place for the latest news, updates, and real life stories from Multiple Sclerosis New Zealand. So sit back, relax, and catch up with us.

Our Bangers to Bluff team 'Keep S'myelin' members attended the Rotary Club of Half Moon Bay's gathering yesterday where they caught up with all their rally peers. The event concluded with MSNZ's President, Neil Woodhams, being presented with a rather large cheque, both in size and value from David Jamieson and Steven Hayes, the President of the Half Moon Bay Rotary Club. Read more about this amazing event below.

To mark World MS Day on 30 May, we have been promoting the MS Symptoms and Diagnosis online course, sharing information widely across the sector. This included GP and pharmacy publications, nursing and allied health networks, ophthalmology and optometry groups, medical schools, healthcare providers, Primary Health Organisations, Te Whatu Ora, our 18 regional societies, GP practices, and people living with MS - encouraging as many people as possible to take part because greater understanding of MS leads to better outcomes for everyone affected.

Last month we hosted our annual **Community Advisors Training** and **Annual Conference** in Wellington - it was a fantastic opportunity to bring representatives from our 18 regional societies together to connect in person, share knowledge and practical insights, exchange experiences, and learn from our guest speakers through a range of valuable sessions. We, along with our guest speakers, and members of our Executive Committee, were hosted by Todd Stephenson MP at Parliament one evening during the conference, which was a real highlight for attendees. This event was recorded, and we will be distributing the recording soon.

The needs of those impacted by MS remain at the heart of everything we do, but we can't do it without you. Please explore the articles below and share your thoughts and feedback. You can reach us on social media, email us at info@msnz.org.nz, or call us on 0800 675 463 📞

If someone has forwarded you this email, please click 'view in browser' at the top of this page to ensure the links work for you. Then head to our website and register to receive your own copy each month: <https://www.msnz.org.nz/about-msnz/latest-news/ms-voice/>

Remember to keep an eye on our [website](#), [Facebook page](#) and [Instagram page](#) for the most up to date information.

MSNZ News and Updates

[B2B 2026 - Auckland to Bluff and Everything In-Between](#)

Thirteen days. Two islands. One unforgettable journey raising \$75,000 for Multiple Sclerosis New Zealand.

It began with an early alarm and a convoy rolling out of Musick Point at dawn, and it ended at the iconic signpost at Stirling Point, Bluff, the southernmost tip of New Zealand. In between, the rally traversed the length of the country on roads less travelled, connecting communities, celebrating supporters, and raising vital funds for people living with MS.



[Pharmac Reviews Exceptional Circumstances Framework to Improve Access and Equity](#)

Pharmac is currently reviewing its Exceptional Circumstances Framework, which is the system used to consider funding medicines for individuals in special or unusual clinical situations outside the normal funded pathways. This includes processes like the Named Patient Pharmaceutical Assessment (NPPA).

The review has been prompted by feedback that the current system can be complex, difficult to understand, and inconsistent. The aim is to make it simpler, clearer, more transparent, and more equitable, while still ensuring decisions align with Pharmac's legislation and fixed medicines budget.

If you have experience with NPPA applications, either positive or negative, we would appreciate hearing your [feedback and thoughts](#) around how the process can be improved for patients.



[Welcoming our New Fundraising and Donor Relations Lead](#)

We're pleased to welcome Damon Rusden as our new Fundraising and Donor Relations Lead. After years working in the charity sector in New Zealand and overseas, Damon is excited to help drive positive change for people living with MS.



My Story, My MS

[One Day at a Time - Hollie's Story with RRMS & Diabetes](#)

I was 26 years old when my world shifted. It was November 2024, and I'd started losing vision in my left eye. I had no idea it was the beginning of a diagnosis that would change everything.

One year & five months on from my diagnosis, I feel grateful. For the treatments available. For the awareness being raised. For every person who showed up for me. MS and Type One Diabetes are part of who I am now – not limitations, but part of my story.



[Podcast: Navigating MS Together – Children, Whānau and the Wider Impact of Diagnosis](#)

To mark World MS Day this May, we're sharing a thought-provoking conversation with MS Otago's Community Advisor Katie Burns and Registered Social Worker Tillie Lassman that explores wider impacts of an MS diagnosis.

[Read more and listen to the podcast here.](#)



Supporting MSNZ

Without the support of amazing people like you, we wouldn't be able to do the work we do at MSNZ. Your **generous contributions** enable us to continue providing **advocacy** and **information** that improves the lives of families affected by multiple sclerosis across Aotearoa, and brings us closer to our vision of being the national leader in service excellence: providing accessible, valued care for everyone touched by MS, from clinicians to people living with MS, their carers, and families. **From all of us at MSNZ, thank you for your support** ❤️

[Ride for MS 2026 - in Northland!](#)

MSNZ is excited to announce Ride for MS 2026 – this year in Northland.

This fundraiser continues the successful Ride for MS 2025 where six people raised over \$36,000 – and had the experience of a lifetime riding across Siem Reap in Cambodia!

This year we are keeping it closer to home and have partnered with Northland Adventures for a five-night all-inclusive e-bike trip, coast to coast from September 21 - 25. If you have ever wanted to adventure and explore Northland while fundraising for a good cause, now is your chance! Register your interest below, and we'll be in touch!

[Download PDF Flyer](#)

[Express Interest in Ride for MS 2026](#)

[Running for Granny Rona](#)

Ten members of one determined whānau are taking on the Selwyn Marathon this May, running and walking in honour of their much-loved Granny Rona. Their efforts celebrate the power of movement while raising awareness and support for people living with MS.

[Dine Out & Donate at the Same Time](#)

Save on the things you love with access to 15,000+ offers across dining, travel, experiences and retail - all for just \$75, with \$15 going to MS New Zealand.

Join now to claim **FREE \$20 Woolworths eGift Card** and go into the draw for a chance to win an **Antarctica Cruise**!

[Explore Other Ways to Donate](#)

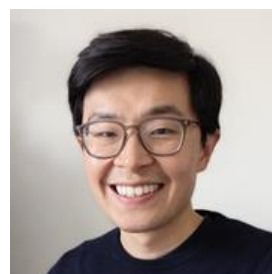


Your Healthcare Team

[Your Healthcare Team: Understanding the Role of a Neurologist](#)

Each month, we'll feature a member of your health team, helping you get to know the people who support your MS journey.

This month, we speak with Dr Benson Chen, a neurologist with expertise in neuro-immunological conditions, to help us understand the role of a neurologist and the diagnosis process.



Information for You

[New look. New updates. Same trusted MS course - launching 1 July 2026](#)

Menzies Institute for Medical Research is excited to introduce the refreshed [Understanding Multiple Sclerosis](#) free, online course, designed for anyone wanting to learn more about MS.

The refreshed version has been updated with the latest McDonald diagnostic criteria, and is now always open, so you can learn at your own pace, whenever suits you.

It's still open to everyone interested in MS, full of engaging videos, activities and quizzes, and it still includes insights from people living with MS, researchers, neurologists and health professionals, and of course, it is still completely free.



So don't delay, enrol today: <https://ms.mooc.utas.edu.au/i/msNZ>

Free MS Symptoms & Diagnosis Course

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Symptoms and Diagnosis is a free short course supporting the MS International Federation World MS Day campaign 'My MS Diagnosis'. It is designed for anyone with an interest in MS including:

- People living with MS, their families and carers
- Medical and allied health professionals
- Advocates, service delivery staff, support workers

To celebrate **World MS Day on 30th May**, why not [take the course](#) and share it with your friends, family, whānau, GP & Nurses, and encourage them to take the course. Knowledge is Power!



Giveaway Alert! ★

Thanks to Allied Medical, we have a [leg lifter](#) up for grabs! Simply enter below, then submit a story for a second entry!

The [Leg Lifter](#) helps users reposition their legs with ease using reinforced hand and foot loops, offering a lightweight, portable solution for mobility support.

[Enter the competition here.](#)

Congratulations to our April winners Christine F and Linda K, we hope your easy grip jar and bottle openers come in handy for you.



Our Sincere Thanks

MSNZ would like to show our appreciation to the **Rotary Club of Half Moon Bay** for their continued support in choosing MSNZ as their masthead charity for their [Bangers to Bluff Rally](#) fundraiser. Your support is deeply appreciated.
Thank you.



Please check out our [latest news](#) section of our website for the most up to date news and information.

Sharing stories offers an insight into what it's like to live with multiple sclerosis.
If you would like to **share your MS story** with the MS community, please get in touch: info@msnz.org.nz

Your continued support helps us to achieve so much for those impacted by MS. Thank You ❤️

Noho ora mai. Stay well and look after yourself.

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