

Short Circuit

People with MS Victoria CONFERENCE

Three Top Class Presentations

Switching inflammation to Repair
Exciting research into repairing the damage done in
Multiple Sclerosis.

Dr Sarabeth Stone

Dr Sarabeth Stone; Is a Senior Research Officer at The Florey

DRIVING LICENCE RULES IN VICTORIA

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Travelling With a Disability Trimorph's, Hurdles and
..Insider Secrets"

Vanessa & James Wood

James has been in a wheelchair for 30 years but he and Vanessa travel widely.

Common Questions about vision problems in MS.

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The potential benefits of so socialisation lifestyle for
people
with MS.

Dr Lisa Grech

(Dr Lisa Grech, who has MS herself,



Light Lunch will be provided



New Beginnings Art Exhibition Invitation

Showcasing works created by people with MS and other neurological conditions. When: May 2nd 2026, 3pm-5pm...

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10am to 2-30pm; May 2nd 2026

Baptist Church, (Station St, & Ellingworth Pde) Box Hill, Vic.

Parking 20/25 Ellingworth Pde

For tickets contact; annerigg06@gmail.com

Mobile: 0400 214 260

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Autumn 2026

Sale of The Nerve Centre; MS Plus recently announced the sale of its Victorian headquarters in Blackburn. MS Plus CEO John Blewonski said it is part of right sizing of its property portfolio to match evolving operational realities. In recent years hybrid working means fewer large buildings are now justified. The funds raised would support improving services for people with MS.

Mr Blewonski said since its earliest days as the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Victoria, (established in 1957), MS Plus has been part of the national MS movement. Now, it provides NDIS, Disability Employment, and Aged Care services, as well as nursing, educational and peer support services in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and ACT. It also fundraises for MS Australia's research and advocacy nationally for MS Plus and other MS organisations.

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MS Research; The two areas of MS research which most excite me are; Research into the links between Epstein Barr Virus and MS; and Research into the possible repair of damage to the myelin sheath protecting our nerves.

Epstein Barr Virus; Over the past decade, a growing body of evidence has suggested Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), as a major environmental risk factor for MS; necessary for MS to develop, but not sufficient on its own. There are numerous research projects tackling MS via EBV. Scientists are developing EBV-targeted vaccines and therapies generally intended to retrain the immune system to better control EBV. Researchers are also investigating whether antiviral drugs can suppress EBV activity and improve MS outcomes by this means. Also, preventing EBV infection altogether is considered a promising long-term strategy for reducing MS risk. Several preventive EBV vaccines are in the early stages of development.

Myelin repair; Myelin is the fatty protective coating that protects our fragile nerve fibres and allows messages to travel quickly along the nerves without being lost or interrupted. In MS, both the myelin and the cells that make it are attacked. That's what causes the symptoms of MS.

Finding treatments that can repair myelin is highly desirable. And according to the UK MS Society we're making real progress, with the first treatments that could repair myelin being tested in clinical trials. Recently researchers found that a diabetes drug metformin could repair myelin in rats. It is now being tested to see if it is effective in people with MS.

People with MS Conference and Art Show; One of the short-term consequences of the sale of the Nerve Centre is that the People with MS conference and Art show will move to a new location at Box Hill Baptist Church. The Conference will be held on Saturday May 2nd. The Art Show will open that afternoon and the works will remain on show in the church gallery until the end of the month

The conference will feature three excellent speakers on three exciting topics;

- **Research into the repair of damage to the human nervous system done by MS**
- **The beneficial effects of socialisation, good diet, and exercise on MS; and**
- **Travel with a disability. Tips from an experienced wheel-chair traveller**

Put the date May 2nd in your diary and to help with catering please let us know if you intend attending. (see the advert on page 5)

Nigel Caswell, President

DRIVING LICENCE RULES IN VICTORIA

As a condition of holding a driver's licence, you have a legal responsibility to report to the relevant licensing authorities **any medical condition** that may affect your driving. This is not a step by the licensing authority to take your licence away. This is about ensuring you are as safe as possible when you are driving.

If you have any concerns about your health and driving it is essential to talk to your doctor about the impact of any medical condition you may have. It is important to let your doctor know that you drive and to ask questions, when you have a new diagnosis or if your condition changes, including as you age.

Ask about your medical condition, and how it may impact your driving including loss of concentration, reduced physical ability or slower reaction times. Also ask about any medication that you are taking including those you buy from a pharmacy without a prescription, (even common eye drops may impact on your driving). Your pharmacist is another important person to ask about your prescriptions and how they may impact your driving.

If you have any concerns, it is always best to speak with a health professional before getting behind the wheel. **Better safe than sorry.**

And remember, if a medical review determines that it is unsafe for you to drive under certain circumstances this is not always the end of the road. A conditional licence may be an option. Meaning you may still be able to drive but only under conditions that allow you to do so safely. Examples of conditions may include; requiring you to wear corrective lenses while driving; driving only during daylight hours; or driving within a limited distance from your home. I for example cannot use my legs properly, because of my MS, and so drive a vehicle which has been modified to be driven "hands-only". My driving licence includes a condition that I "drive a modified vehicle"

Finally, you may have noticed articles on the internet claiming that the federal and state governments have recently made changes to the rules governing driving licences for people over 70 or over 75 in Victoria. **This is not true.** Vic Roads have advised, in writing, that the only specific restriction is that if you are over 75, only the 3-year renewal option is available. This shorter renewal period helps ensure your licence reflects your current health and fitness to drive.

(Article by N Caswell, based on material from; <https://transport.vic.gov.au/registration-and-licensing/licences/medical-conditions-and-reviews/medical-conditions>)

Some MS One-liners (off the Web)

My immune system is so bored it's attacking itself!

MS shows God has a sense of humour ; -) he gives you an unexpected urgent need to pee and the inability to travel quickly.

What do we want? A cure for MS Brain Fog! When do we want it? ...Want what?

Oh, really? You know someone who has MS? Me too!

I was going to run a marathon today. Then I realized that every day is a marathon for me, so I took a nap instead.

Some people fake sick days. I fake well days.

Don't blame it on the MS. Blame it on your shoes. It's a great excuse to buy new ones!

Common Questions about vision problems in MS.

[Note:- Multiple sclerosis can cause vision problems due to damage to the optic nerves — those that connect the eyes to the brain — or to nerves that control the muscles involved in eye movement, which affects eye coordination. These nerves get damaged in MS due to a misguided immune attack against myelin, the fatty coating that protects and insulates nerve fibres.]

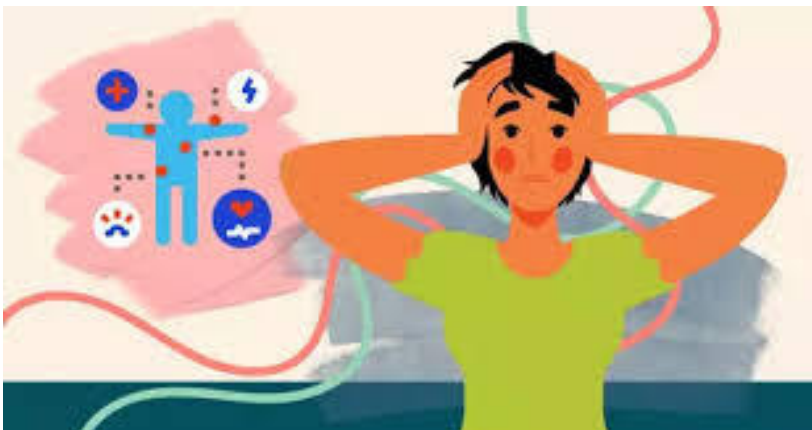
How many known eye conditions are linked to multiple sclerosis? Several abnormalities in vision have been linked to multiple sclerosis, and are, in fact, common early signs of the disease. Vision problems reported in MS patients include optic neuritis, or inflammation of the optic nerve, double vision, called diplopia, blurred vision, color blindness (poor or deficient color vision), and rapid, uncontrolled eye movements known as nystagmus. Loss of vision may sometimes occur. Some eye conditions associated with MS are temporary and resolve on their own, while others can become persistent.

Can multiple sclerosis cause flashing lights in the eyes? Yes, multiple sclerosis can cause a person to see flashing lights — bright spots, or points of light in the field of vision, often referred to as phosphenes. Phosphenes in MS can last for a few seconds or be permanent, and are generally more noticeable in the dark. These flashing lights are frequently linked to optic neuritis, or inflammation of the optic nerve, but also may be associated with other eye problems.

Can a person have multiple sclerosis without eye symptoms? Yes. About two-thirds of people with multiple sclerosis develop visual disturbances at some point in their lives, implying that others can have the disease without experiencing eye symptoms. However, eye-related complications are common in MS patients, and having regular eye examinations is recommended for people with MS.

Is dry eye a symptom of multiple sclerosis? Yes, multiple sclerosis can cause dry eyes. The condition, which may become severe, is thought to derive from a reduced sensitivity in the cornea (the transparent, outer, protective covering of the eyeball), reduced eye motor responses to stimuli, including a reduction in tear production, and/or increased air exposure due to muscle limitations that interfere with blinking.

[Reprint from MS News Today]



Victorian Multi Purpose Taxi Program

This program supports Victorians with limited mobility by offering subsidised taxi fares. It pays half the cost of each taxi trip taken by its users, up to \$60 per trip. With an annual subsidy cap of \$2,180 for members, other than wheelchair users or members exempted from the cap due to certain medical or other criteria.

There are three main criteria you must meet in order to be eligible for the program.

- **Residential criteria;** You must be a permanent resident of Australia and live in Victoria.
- **Medical criteria;** You must have:
 - a severe disability that prevents you from safely independently using public transport, or a permanent disability, or a disability that is not likely to improve with treatment.
- **Financial hardship criteria;** To demonstrate financial hardship, you must hold one of the following cards that are attached to an income support payment:
 - **DVA Cards:** Pensioner Concession Card, Gold Repatriation Health Card (TPI – Totally Permanently Incapacitated), Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA), Gold Repatriation Health Card (War Widow or War Widower),
 - **Centrelink Pension Cards (PCC):** Jobseeker, Single or Partnered Parenting Payment, Carer Payment, Disability Pension, Youth Allowance.
 - **Centrelink Health Care Cards (HCC):** Jobseeker Payment (JSP), Youth Allowance HCC (YA), Special Benefit HCC (SpB).
 - If you don't hold one of the above cards, you must provide an appropriate [Notice of Assessment](#), or [Non-Lodgement Advice](#) from the Australian Tax Office;
- **Note;** Passengers who require the use of a wheelchair permanently are exempt from the financial hardship test.

To apply for a multipurpose taxi program card, you need to see your GP and he fills in the necessary paperwork.

If travelling by train and you use a wheelchair or power chair you travel free and also by bus. Or, to find out more information, visit the [Safe Transport Victoria website \(opens in a new window\)](#). *(N Caswell)*

Melbourne Airport Online Mobility Hub

The Online Mobility Hub for Melbourne Airport is designed to provide you with all the information you need to plan your trip through the airport if you have accessibility or disability needs.

[Need help moving around the airport? Our network of Mobility Hubs make it easier to move between car parks, check-in areas, baggage halls, and passenger pick up and drop off zones.](#)

We hope you find this Online Mobility Hub useful.

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NEW BEGINNINGS ART **EXHIBITION**



You are invited to the opening of our Art Exhibition, to be officially opened by Paul Hamer MP

Showcasing works created by people with MS and other neurological conditions.

When: May 2nd 2026, 3pm-5pm

General public viewing: May 4th - 8th 2026, 1pm-5pm

Where: Baptist Church, Cnr Station St & Ellingworth Parade, Box Hill, Vic (Parking -20/25 Ellingworth Pde)

Admission Free

RSVP by April 20th to Dallas Isaacs

dallas.isaacs@pwmsv.org.au





Only \$15

People with MS Victoria 2026 conference

Three Top Class Presentations

Switching Inflammation to Repair

Exciting research into repairing the damage done in Multiple Sclerosis.

Dr Sarabeth Stone

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Travelling With a Disability

Triumphs, Hurdles, and “Insider Secrets”

Vanessa & James Wood

James has been in a wheelchair for 30 years but he and Vanessa travel widely.

The potential benefits of socialisation and lifestyle for people with MS.

Dr Lisa Grech

(Dr Lisa Grech, who has MS herself, is a Psychologist and Senior Research Fellow at Deakin University.)

Light Lunch will be provided

ONLY

\$15

For tickets contact

Anne; annerigg06@gmail.com, or
Mobile: 0400 214 260

Limited assistance with transport costs available on application

ONLY

\$15

10am to 2-30pm; May 2nd 2026

Baptist Church, Station St, Box Hill, Vic.



Providing information, referral
and support to people with
Multiple Sclerosis.

PwMS Vic Inc. is endorsed as a deductible gift recipient and a registered charity. Gifts of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

Privacy Policy is available from <https://pwmsv.org.au/privacy-policy/>



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