Spring Edition 2026

Short Circuit

People with MS Victoria

Notice of PwMS Annual General Meeting To be held on Monday 16th November 2026 at 10:00

AGM

Presentation on "Art Therapy" - How and Why it is beneficial to people with MS

RSVP: anne.rigg@pwmsv.org.au
Please go to the PwMS Website **www.pwmsv.org.au**

Helping people who do not have a computer or do not use Zoom
If you have a friend who would like to attend, but who doesn't use Zoom, please invite them to join you to attend the meeting online.

Nigel Caswell
President

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

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

People with Multiple Sclerosis Victoria Inc.
ABN: 73 104 198 752
admin@pwmsv.org.au



PRESIDENT'S REPORT
Spring 2026

Sale of The Nerve Centre; As stated in my last presidents report, MS Plus recently announced the sale of its Victorian headquarters in Blackburn, and said the funds raised would support improving services for people with MS.
I am pleased to report that MS Plus have moved into new headquarters at 8 Redfern Rd, Hawthorn East, (corner of Rose street). Allied Health services and appointments are now operating from the new location, and facilities include a new gym, in a larger purpose-built space

The MS Plus website says the new Hawthorn East facility represents a significant investment in the future of MS Plus services. The site offers improved accessibility, dedicated disability parking, and a convenient drop-off point with an accessibility ramp via the Rose Street driveway

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Voting Centre Accessibility; The Victorian Govt's Electoral Matters Committee has recently released its final report on its Inquiry into voting centre accessibility. You can view a copy of the report, at https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/inquiries/inquiry-into-voting-centre-accessibility/reports

Among the great many findings of the enquiry were; although the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC), has a strategic plan for election, it is framed narrowly as physical accessibility. With wheelchair access as the primary measure of accessibility, it fails to reflect the full range of barriers experienced by voters and does not accurately reflect the experience of people with disability. Also, it only relates to early voting centres and not to election-day voting centres.

Other findings included that the VEC provides facilities to enable voters to use a chair or wheelchair when filling out ballot papers. However, they were not labelled to prioritise their use by people with disability, and not wide enough to include a support person. Also, Assistive listening systems which make it easier for people with hearing loss to hear, are currently only offered at early voting centres and low-sensory voting centres.

Among the many recommendations are that 'voting passports', (developed in the UK), which voters can fill out to indicate any support they need, could be helpful; and that voting centres could have designated 'accessibility officers' ensuring that people with disability get the support they need; and that an Accessibility Performance Report after each election would provide a good opportunity to identify areas for future improvement.

Voting should be easy to access, private and dignified for every Victorian. Many people with MS will find this report interesting and its recommendations very welcome.

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People with MS:- AGM, Conference and Art Show; One of the consequences of the sale of the Nerve Centre is that we have re-thought arrangements for our Annual General Meeting, Conference, and Art Show. We believe our AGM and Annual Conference should, in future, always be hybrid events,. (physical events, simultaneously streamed on-line). We believe this will allow more people to attend.
The Art Show opening and Conference next year will also be held on separate days. The Conference will as usual feature three excellent speakers on topical MS issues. The Art Show will move to a new location next year most likely at Box Hill Town-Hall. More Information will be provided in the Summer 26-27 Short Circuit.

Nigel Caswell, (OAM), President

AGM Agenda

1. Open and welcome
2. Confirmation of attendance and apologies
3. Minutes of the previous annual general meeting held on 10 November 2025 (available at www.pwmsv.org.au)
4. Correspondence
5. Presentation of the Treasurer's report
6. Presentation of the Presidents Report
7. Election (if necessary) of Committee (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and general committee members)
8. Presentation on "Art Therapy" - How and Why it is beneficial to people with MS
9. Close of meeting

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Nigel Caswell
President

SCAM ALERT — STAY SAFE

Scammers send fake texts, calls and emails pretending to be your bank, myGov, ATO, Dorevitch or big companies like Microsoft. They try to make you panic so you click a link, call a number or give personal details.

STOP – don't rush.
DON'T CLICK – avoid links in strange messages.
DON'T CALL – don't call numbers from suspicious texts.
DON'T SHARE – never give passwords, PINs or security codes.
DON'T GIVE ACCESS – never let a stranger control your phone or computer.
If you get a message from your bank, open your banking app yourself or type the bank's website manually. If a call feels wrong, hang up and call the organisation using a real number. Contact your bank immediately if you think you've been scammed.

Continence Aids Payment Scheme or CAPS

The current (financial year 2025-2026) payment is $717.10, but it can change marginally from year to year...

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More Skills, More Talent – Strengthening Our Committee

People with Multiple Sclerosis Victoria Inc. (PwMS-Vic) is committed to representing and supporting all people living with disability particularly those affected by Multiple Sclerosis...

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MS Artists stories

Art classes for people with multiple sclerosis are conducted by noted artist Artur Lyczba on Tuesday at Box Hill Town Hall...

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PwMS Art Exhibition

Art classes for people with multiple sclerosis are conducted by noted artist Artur Lyczba on Tuesday at Box Hill Town Hall.

“All artists are welcome to join People with MS by clicking the membership button on the PwMS website “

LUKE GAETANO

Luke was born in 1957 then diagnosed with MS in 2007. between these years he lived a full and happy life (as do we all) eventually running his own business as a delicatessen provider. In his spare time he enjoyed bushwalking, camping, a bit of golf and fishing. He still manages to get in a bit of fishing.



His MS journey started with several ‘minor’ symptoms that we duly recognised, after an MRI, as relapsing remitting MS. these symptoms continued in severity until now he gets about in a powered wheelchair

When you see the quality of Luke’s art you’ll be surprised to hear that until starting these art sessions in 2020, Luke had never turned his hand to any art except photography. Now he produces exceptional paintings that combine several mediums. This is evidenced by his painting ‘climbing a mountain in a wheelchair’, a corollary for living with MS for many of us, which was sold in this year’s MS art exhibition.

We will see more of Lukes art in this year’s MS art exhibition, and many more to come.

More Skills, More Talent – Strengthening Our Committee

People with Multiple Sclerosis Victoria Inc. (PwMS-Vic) is committed to representing and supporting all people living with disability particularly those affected by Multiple Sclerosis. To continue growing as an organisation and better serve our community, we are seeking to broaden the skills, experience, and expertise of our committee.

To enable this, we are proposing amendments to our Constitution that will allow us to attract a wider range of talented individuals who share our commitment to improving the lives of people with MS.

These proposed constitutional amendments will be presented for consideration and voting at our **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**:

Date: Monday, 16 November 2026
Time: 10:00 am
Format: Online

Holding the AGM online will make it easier for members across Victoria to attend, participate in the discussion, and cast their vote.

We encourage all members to join the meeting, learn more about the proposed changes, and have their say. Your participation is important in helping shape the future of our organisation and ensuring PwMS-Vic continues to grow with the skills and talent needed to support our community effectively. We will also have a guest speaker.

Further information, will be provided prior to the AGM.

Motion – [Eligibility for membership]
Clause 3.1 of the Constitution as amended at AGM 17th October 2011 says:

> A natural person whose principal place of residence is within the State of Victoria and who has the illness of multiple sclerosis or any associated neurological disorder and who is nominated or approved for membership as provided in these rules is eligible to be a member of the Association on payment of the entrance fee and the annual subscription payable under these rules.

Proposed new amended clause 3.1:

> That a natural person ***who is a citizen of Australia***, who has multiple sclerosis or ***a similar*** *neurological disorder*, ***or who is a carer for a family member with such a condition;*** and who is nominated or approved for membership in accordance with these rules, ***shall*** be deemed eligible for membership of the Association on payment of ***any*** entrance fee and annual subscription payable under these rules.

Note:
Under existing clauses 4.1 and 4.2 of the constitution there is currently no entrance fee or annual subscription.



A LIFE – My PERSONAL JOURNEY WITH MS BY ANTHONY VIRGONA

Mr Anthony Virgona passed away in February 2016, just four days after making the deeply personal decision to stop the kidney dialysis that had kept him alive for the previous three years.

Anthony had lived with multiple sclerosis for two decades. Over that time, the degenerative condition took away almost all of his independence. He became a strong advocate for voluntary euthanasia and for the right of terminally ill and severely disabled people to have a say in their own end-of-life choices.

At the time, Anthony said, “I’ve been fighting this disease for 20 years and I’ve just had enough. People who are in a position like me, people with cancer, people who are dying or deteriorating, we should have the right to make a choice whether we go on and we should be able to go peacefully.”

Anthony was posthumously awarded the Sir Louis Pyke Award by Multiple Sclerosis Victoria in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the MS community.

Sir Louis Pyke was a philanthropist and Multiple Sclerosis board member whose wife had MS. The award is presented each year to a person who has made a significant contribution to people living with multiple sclerosis, their families or carers.

Multiple Sclerosis Victoria Chief Executive Robyn Hunter at the time in 2016, said Anthony worked tirelessly to raise awareness about MS and to support the everyday practical concerns of people living with the disease.

“Anthony was inspiring, caring and made a significant contribution to helping others through his willingness to share his own experiences and challenges with multiple sclerosis and by providing information to others,” Ms Hunter said.

“It is an absolute honour to award him the Sir Louis Pyke Award posthumously.”

The following are his final words to everyone

It is now January 2016, 10 years since I started writing my book, from walking with a walking frame to this now. From living at home to living in a nursing home for the last 12 years.

My health has now deteriorated further and I have been on dialysis for 2 ½ years as I lost 1 kidney and the 1 I have is working 1 per cent, and dialysis 3 times a week is keeping me alive. Unfortunately, now dialysis is becoming too difficult for me and have decided to end my dialysis on the 5th March 2016,

This means I will pass within five to ten days. I am ok with this, I have lost a lot since January 1999, but am grateful in what I have achieved.

I enjoyed my involvement with the MS Society, firstly back in my early years as an MS Ambassador. Most of all, My Role as Vice President and Editor of our Newsletter Short Circuit Newsletter, I enjoyed 12 wonderful years on the committee with such a wonderful group of people I am glad to call friends now.

Many friends at MSL, like Robyn Hunter, Raye Bayley, Sandy Kugis who have helped me so much with sending the newsletter, also Flavio and Nancy from FM Printing.

Thanks to all our members throughout our Metro and Country regions of Victoria for your support over the 12 years.

Read My Life with Multiple Sclerosis – Learning to live with Multiple Sclerosis – My personal Story

Written by Anthony Virgona

Vice President/Editor PwMS-V

Australian Government

Continence Aids Payment Scheme or CAPS

- The current (financial year 2026-27) payment is $739.40
- To be eligible, the recipient must be:

1. Over five years of age
2. An Australian citizen
3. Have permanent and severe incontinence caused by either an eligible neurological condition or other eligible condition

- You are not receiving government funding through another scheme such as the NDIS or a Home Care Package (MY Aged Care)

There are many conditions listed for both categories. Neurological conditions include several categories of disability, and non-neurological conditions include some types of cancers, prolapses, and fistulas.

If you have a non-neurological condition, you must also hold a Pensioner Concession Card from the Australian Government or the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Details, including how to apply, are on the CAPS website. or you can call the Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS) team

The (CAPS) team number is 1800 239 309
The website is https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/continence-aids-payment-scheme-caps#how-to-apply-for-caps



People with MS supporting People with MS

www.pwms.net.au, admin@pwmsv.net.au, facebook.com/pwmsv

A registered charity ABN: 73 104 198 752



PwMS Victoria is a not for profit organisation of volunteers living with MS, supporting people, of all ages, with MS, their families and carers.

We provide;

- Annual Conference with expert speakers, and regular newsletters.
- Lobbying of gov't and service providers for improved support services and treatments.
- Up-to-date news and developments in research and medication via our Facebook page.
- Information about concessions and aid schemes, accessible holiday locations, members' stories and much more via our website.

We need more volunteers to help us continue to provide these services.

If you know someone who might join our small committee, send contact details or a nomination to admin@pwmsv.net.au

Nominations may be returned to the President PwMS-V Inc.
By Email at; caswellnigelp13@gmail.com

People with Multiple Sclerosis Victoria Inc
NOMINATION FORM 2026-28

I/We.....
Being members of People with Multiple Sclerosis (Vic) Inc. hereby nominate the following member of the said Association, for Election as:

- President: (name) .....
- Secretary: (name .....
- Treasurer: (name) .....
- Ordinary Committee Member (name)

.....

Nominator.....**Date**.....

Acceptance by Nominee

(Name).....

Signed..... **Date** .....