

# Progress

## IMPACT REPORT



**A look at the life  
changing MS  
research you've  
made possible  
throughout 2019**





A welcome message from

*Associate Professor  
Desmond Graham*

## IT'S BEEN A YEAR OF BREAKTHROUGHS THANKS TO YOU

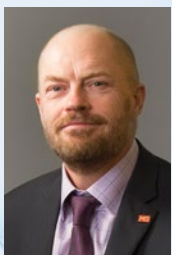
Thank you for being part of our passionate and effective MS Research Australia community.

None of the incredible achievements you will read about in this report would have been possible without people like you.

This research is a team effort – between scientists, generous supporters, people living with multiple sclerosis (MS) and their loved ones.

Whether you contribute financially, or by sharing your expertise and experience, you are helping people to live better lives. You are taking us closer to the day when we can stop this debilitating disease for good.

I hope you feel very proud reading about the work you make possible.



Warm regards,

**Associate Professor  
Desmond Graham**  
President of the Board



**“THERE ARE NO WORDS TO DESCRIBE WHAT A CURE WOULD MEAN FOR ME AND EVERY SINGLE PERSON LIVING WITH THIS DISEASE.”** - Lauren, living with MS.

I'm 31 and I've had relapsing remitting MS for six years. MS research is so important to me, but also to my young son and my future family.

If researchers find a cure for MS, my son could grow up with a mum who is fit and healthy and MS free.

We could go to bed each night and not have to worry what tomorrow will bring with this unpredictable disease.

**A life without MS would be a dream come true for me and for all of us living with this disease. We all deserve it. But we need everybody's help to make this possible.**



Take a look  
at what you've  
achieved!



## HERE ARE SOME OF THE BIG BREAKTHROUGHS YOU SUPPORTED THIS PAST YEAR

### Your support has helped fund:

- Research from Associate Professor Kaylene Young, funded in partnership with the Trish MS Research Foundation, which shows that a non-invasive method called repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation helps the brain produce more myelin.
- The MS Research Australia Brain Bank, which has provided more than 3,000 tissue samples to 30 cutting-edge MS research projects around the world.
- Research from Dr Steven Petratos, funded in partnership with the Trish MS Research Foundation, investigating a drug currently used to treat a different neurological disease. It encourages the body's own mechanisms to repair damaged myelin in the brain and spinal cord. While this research is still in the early stages, if successful it may have a big impact on MS.
- A collaborative workshop to bring together people living with MS, health professionals, clinicians and pain experts to discuss pain treatment options for people living with MS.

### Your support has helped advocate for:

- The first ever treatment for secondary progressive MS (SPMS) which was approved in Australia by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) in November 2019. The treatment, Siponimod (Mayzent), is an oral medication that targets immune cells.
- The addition of two medications used to treat adult MS, Gilenya (fingolimod) and Tysabri (natalizumab), to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for use in children with relapsing remitting MS (RRMS) in October 2019. This will give younger people with MS access to affordable treatment options.
- Improved access to medicinal cannabis for people with MS via submission to the federal and state governments.

Thank you!

# YOU POWER UP NEW RESEARCH AND NEW HOPE

## What does the role of diet play in MS?

Doctoral student Alice Saul aims to find clearer answers, with the help of a grant from MS Research Australia.

**“I’d like to thank all the donors and MS community who make my work possible. This research is important because it will be used to design and test diets and provide dietary advice to people with MS.”**

Alice is one of the 301 researchers awarded an MS Research Australia grant as part of the \$43.3 million commitment to funding MS research in the past 15 years. A wide variety of funded research projects will investigate a range of lifestyle factors, myelin repair, cellular therapies and new methods to better track the progression of MS.

*Thank you for supporting tomorrow's breakthroughs.*



**“I understand the challenges that MS presents and I’m passionate about making a difference in the lives of others by tackling these problems.”**

- Ms Alice Saul, MS Researcher

## YOU HELP RESEARCHERS SHARE KNOWLEDGE

**Identifying MS risk factors and repairing MS damage were just two of the hot topics discussed at the Progress in MS Research Scientific Conference late last year.**

More than 150 of the world’s leading MS researchers, clinicians and healthcare professionals gathered to discuss and share their findings on:



- Smarter clinical trials,
- Deep characterisation of MS,
- Patient reported outcomes, and
- Accelerating the drug development pipeline.

Our Live Update was held directly after the conference, translating the scientific progress made in MS research into meaningful information for the MS community.

Over 900 people affected by MS from Australia and around the world tuned in to connect in cyberspace with the expert panel as they discussed a variety of exciting updates – the recorded event has since attracted more than 9,000 views.

To watch on demand  
**CLICK HERE**





“My grandfather had MS for 30 odd years and inevitably succumbed to the condition when medications weren’t available.

Now we have so many medications available to us that are capable of stopping, and in some cases, reversing the disease.”

- Dr Steven Petratos, MS Researcher

## YOU ARE PART OF A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT THAT MAKES A BIGGER DIFFERENCE, FASTER

**Our research partnerships have resulted in some very exciting developments for the MS community over the past year.**

- With MS Research Australia’s support, [The Australian and New Zealand Genetics Consortium \(ANZgene\)](#) continue to work together and with international teams to increase knowledge about how genes contribute to the risk of developing MS.
- People living with MS can benefit from a number of new reports from [The Australian MS Longitudinal Study \(AMSLS\)](#). These highlight practical information on the impact of MS, including the role of a healthy mind and healthy diet, the influence of other diseases on a person with MS, and employment outcomes for people living with the disease.
- MS Research Australia has partnered with Australian and New Zealand Scientists on the [vitamin D MS Prevention Trial \(PrevANZ\)](#). More than 200 people have been monitored during the trial to determine whether vitamin D can reduce their risk of developing MS.
- [The Australian MS Autologous Haematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant \(AHSCT\) Registry](#) continued to study the effectiveness and safety of this therapy. This information will help guide when this treatment can be used.

**Thank you for being part of the community that’s working together to change the lives of people living with MS.**



*Cathy says  
Thank you*

I've been living with MS for about 16 years.

This is such a silent illness – you may look great on the outside but people don't actually know what you're dealing with on a daily basis.

**This research is made possible by all the wonderful and generous people who make donations to MS Research Australia.**

**"No matter how big or how small the donation, every bit helps to finding a cure for this illness. Thank you."**

- Cathy, living with MS.

## HELP KEEP UP THE **EXTRAORDINARY** MOMENTUM THAT WE HAVE BUILT TOGETHER

**In the last 12 months, you have helped MS Research Australia to transform the lives of many people living with MS.**

You have helped make new treatments available that reduce the huge burden on people living with this disease, and the people they love. You have furthered our understanding of why this disease begins, and how we can stop its awful progression.

But there is still so much to do to stop and reverse MS, and the power it has to take away people's health, independence and quality of life.

With gratitude,

**Dr Julia Morahan**  
Head of Research

*Donate to MS Research Australia today.*



**Please help us continue our work, so we can keep changing the lives and futures of people with MS.**

**MS Research Australia**

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