



# THE LEGACY OF MS AUCKLAND

**1964** MS Auckland Society was founded by Alice and Bill Cole

**1965** MS Auckland became an Incorporated Society; Bill Cole is elected as President; Patron – George Gair MP for North Shore; Evelyn Knight is the first field officer, on a voluntary basis; Internationally, precise criteria for the diagnosis of MS are developed.

**1967** The International Federation of MS Societies is established in London, England. The federation represents 35 national societies around the world. Bill Cole attended the inaugural AGM of the MS Auckland Society and was appointed to the Management Committee as a regional rep for Auckland. The MS National Society is incorporated and includes member societies in the Waikato, Manawatu, Wellington Canterbury, South Canterbury, Otago and Southland as well as Auckland.

**1968** Committee members were: Mr and Mrs K Wadham, Mr J Caughie, Mt. T. La Roche, Mr Laurie, Mr Slocombe, Mrs P Hogg, Mrs B Magil, Messrs – Bradnock, Hornbuckle and Hodgkinson.

**1969** MS Auckland has 298 members, 130 'patients' with MS and 168 as other members. Alice Cole receives the British Empire Medal (BEM) for services to people with MS. She is the second person in the world to receive this honour after the world-famous cellist Jacqueline du Pre.

**1972** A research survey for the NZ MS Society is published titled 'The social consequences of MS.'

Alice and Bill Cole offer their home in Laingholm as a holiday retreat for members of the Society. The home is named after Alice.

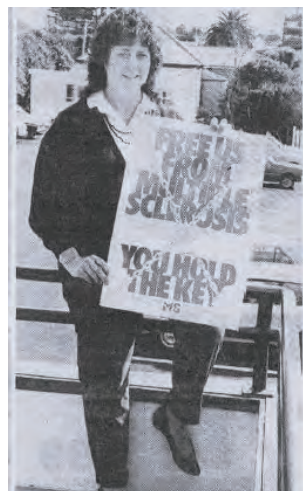
**1975** There are now 426 members of the Society.

**1977** The Society first receives funds through raffles held by the Northcote Lions club. Jim Caughie receives a cheque for the MS Auckland Society.

**1978** Hilda Brown is elected President of the MS Auckland Society. Alice Cole meets Queen Elizabeth on the Royal Tour of NZ. Bill Cole passed away two months earlier. Hilda Brown approaches Ken Wadham to establish a branch of the society for North Auckland. Multiple Sclerosis Auckland North Inc. is founded. The region covered extends from Devonport to the Bay of Islands. Jim Caughie is elected as President. The first CT scan is available at Auckland Hospital. Alice Cole contributed to its purchase. The Mayfield Group is established as a social group for members with MS.



David Ashton



Pam Hogg

**1980** MS Auckland North Inc. changes its name to MS North Shore Society Inc. President is John Datson. Mayor of Auckland Sir Dove-Myer Robinson launches the first postal appeal for the Auckland, North Shore (including Northland) MS Societies, as part of the national MS Appeal Week. Up to now, only 2% of envelopes are usually returned in postal appeals. The joint appeal raised \$22,000 and \$91,000 in total was raised nationally. 'Fashion parades with difference' event was organised by Margaret Johnson of Takapuna, to raise funds for the North Shore MS Society, and held at the Mon Desir Hotel in Takapuna. 3,000 people nationwide have MS.

**1981** MS North Shore field worker Evelyn Knight is given a new Honda Civic as a work car, with funds raised by the Northcote Lions club. TVNZ holds a Telethon, MS Auckland Society and MS North Shore were recipient charities. Nancy Caughie received a cheque, on behalf of the MS North Shore society.

**1983** The Masonic Hotel in Devonport raises

**\$4,000 for the MS North Shore Society.** Nancy Caughie is the recipient of a new motorised scooter. Mayor of North Shore City George Gair is guest speaker at the MS North Shore Society's AGM, held in Takapuna.

**1985** The West Auckland MS Auckland's members Spinning and Weaving Group receives a new electric spinning wheel from funds raised by West Auckland Pakeke Lions Club. Pam Hogg (Evelyn Knight's daughter in law) is employed as the first paid field worker for the MS North Shore Society. Pam established the North Shore Society office at the Mary Thomas Centre. Having this office meant that members could call her and visit if they were in the area. Pupuke charity day raises \$9400 for MS: The Pupuke Golf Club feature event of the year, raises funds for the MS North Shore society. Money raised went to research and funding for Pam Hogg's salary.

**1989** (March) The Four-leaf clover MS National Appeal and the first television commercial for the national appeal. David Ashton from MS North Shore, featured in the first commercial that was filmed in Auckland Domain. West Auckland field worker Rosemary Goulding is given a station wagon to use when visiting clients, donated to the MS Auckland Society by Waitemata Lions. The Society had been trying to save for a new car for three years. Support was also given from the former Mayor of New Lynn, Mr Hugh Brown, and his wife Hilda. Dr Tom Miller is appointed as the Research Director of the MS Society of NZ Inc. He establishes a team of researchers: Graham le Gros, Geoffrey Krissenen and Thomas Baxstrom.

**1990** MS Auckland Society has its office at 14 Erson Ave, Royal Oak. Field workers work in western, southern, and central Auckland. The MS Auckland Society publishes its first newsletter- Around and About as a small A5 sized newsletter, edited by Ken Mills. By 2000 the newsletter is re-named Thrive Supporter News. 'A Bird's Eye View,' by Lorraine Neo, illustrated by Brett Hawkins, is published by the MS North Shore Society. This book explains MS to children. MRI scans are introduced for the first time at Auckland Hospital and made available to people with MS. All Society members are no longer referred to as MS patients but as People with MS (PwMS)

**1991** SailAbility is founded by Dr Peter Cowley from Herne Bay. Steven Wear who has MS, joins the group and stars in a TV commercial to promote SailAbility. Sir Owen Glenn ONZM is a Patron.



**1993** The Women's Health Action Trust prints a leaflet entitled 'Your rights under the Privacy Act' Re: gaining access to personal medical records. This is promoted by the MS Auckland Society to its members. David Ashton is elected as President of the MS North Shore Society. MS North Shore establishes the 'Wishing Well Fund.' Members can apply for funding to purchase mobility equipment. Interferon beta is approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration as the first drug to alter the underlying course of relapsing/remitting MS.

**1995** Steven Old, whose mother had MS, launches the Great NZ Trail Ride as a fundraising event for the MS Auckland Society.

**1996** Janet Hewer is elected as President of the MS Auckland Society, and Daphne Davison as Vice President. Rosemary Goulding is the manager of MS Auckland Society. David Ashton and others from the MS North Shore Society establish a social group for men with MS 'Boys R US.' \$40,000 is raised for MS Auckland from the Great NZ Trail Ride in the Coromandel. The Papakura Ladies Group compiles a recipe book as a fundraiser for MS Auckland. MS North Shore scales down some of its traditional fundraising activities such as postal appeals, and counter sale of sweets in shops, to try and target philanthropic Trusts and Foundations, and to develop a strategic fundraising approach. The Neurological Services Unit at Auckland Hospital warns people not to get too encouraged by an article published in the NZ Women's Weekly, about two new treatments for MS. This warning is published in the Auckland Society's newsletter.

**1997** Dr Clive Ross, Clinical Director of Oral Health Auckland Healthcare, is nominated as Patron of the MS Auckland Society. The Society moves to

a new office space at 823 Manukau Rd, Epsom. The Four-leaf clover Read-Athon is launched as a fundraising event and becomes an annual event. The carnation is adopted nationally as a symbol for MS. The Government reviews eligibility to the Sickness Benefit and Invalids Benefit and introduces funding for home care services to people with a disability. The New Frontier Trust receives funding from NZ on Air to produce a magazine style television programme called DisAbilities. The programmes are made by people who have a disability themselves.

**1998** Adrian Bowling is elected as President of the MS Auckland Society. Dr Ernie Willoughby





is nominated as Patron of the MS Auckland Society. MS North Shore is featured on Inside Out TV.

**1999 The Lotteries Commission announces that it will no longer fund organisations wishing to purchase equipment.** Tina French is employed as General Manager for the MS North Shore Society. David Ashton receives a Community Recognition Award from North Shore Community and Social Services. Annual events for both societies include children's camps, awareness week, charity balls and the Four-leaf clover appeal. MS Auckland launches its first ever website – www.msakl.org.nz

**2000 Christine Hart is elected as President of the MS Auckland Society,** Avril Proud as Vice President. Pharmac provides funding for new treatments imported into NZ. MS Auckland introduces an added support group for professional women, between the ages of 25–50 years, with MS. MS Auckland members take part in the Great NZ Horse Ride. The ride covered 150 kilometres of countryside in the Coromandel. There were 360 riders and 80 volunteers. MS Auckland moves its office to Taylors Rd, Morningside. This was funded from the sale of the Royal Oak property and a grant from the ASB. The North Shore MS Society with MS Auckland launch the school read-athon on the Shore, to raise awareness of MS and as a fundraiser for the society, organised by Trish Robertson and Tina French.

**2001 Robyn Edwards is President of the North Shore Society.** MS North Shore has a dinner to celebrate its 25th anniversary.

**2002 'Multiple Stories' celebrates 35 years of the MS Society of NZ Inc. is published,** (includes 'A Bum Deal' written by David Ashton). Allison Wheeler drafts an article for the MS North Shore Society newsletter, outlining two models of care for people with MS, the wellness model, and the medical model. This gets recognition around NZ and other societies ask permission to reprint in their own newsletters. Graham Wear is elected as President of the MS North Shore Society and Colin Wise is elected as President of the MS Auckland

Society. Green and Mean: There is much controversy around the AgResearch 'Cows for MS' bio-medical genetic research programme. Dr Tom Miller appears in a televised debate with Green Party co-leader Jeanette Fitzsimmons.

**2003 MS Auckland launches a new programme for members: the DREAMS programme,** Delightful Recreation and Enjoyable Activities for people with Multiple Sclerosis. Tab Baldwin, coach for the Tall Blacks establishes a programme of fitness and recreation activities for members. Members of the MS North Shore Society attend a volunteers gathering at Government House in Wellington, with Governor General Dame Sylvia Cartwright.

**2004 Tina French receives a Civic Award** from George Wood, Mayor of North Shore City. The Pukekohe café group is established for MS members.

**2004 MS NZ in conjunction with the Health Research Council agrees to fund The National MS Prevalence Study.** A contract was signed between the HRC and Otago University's Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences who undertake the study. Professor George Jelenik founder and head of (OMS) in Australia is invited as a guest speaker at a gathering organised by the MS Auckland Society. The event is held at Eden Park and over 200 people attend. MS North Shore launches the first MS art exhibition at the EDGE, Aotea Centre. All the art works are created by someone who lives with MS.

**2006 David Ashton is voted North Shore citizen of the year.** With support from the ANZ Staff Foundation MS Auckland introduces a new initiative for members: An Indulgence and Pamper



Tina French



Neil Woodhams

Tina French becomes the Society's Secretary and office administrator. Gary McMahon is the General Manager. A strategic review is undertaken by Bruce Howart. The logo from the MS Auckland Society continues as the official logo of the newly merged society, now known as Auckland Region. The newly combined MS Auckland Society newsletter entitled 'Thrive, Supporter News' now contains news from the North Shore, later editions are entitled 'Around and About.' The Auckland Regional MS Trust is established to administer funds invested from the sale of the Taylors Rd property and money raised from bequests. With a grant from the Caversham Foundation, MS Auckland launches a new informative Directory of Services – Around MS people thriving. The directory listed hundreds of organisations providing disability. MS Auckland holds its biggest (to date) Footloose Funwalk fundraiser event, at the Trust Stadium, Waitakere, over \$7,000 was raised.

**2009 MS Auckland Field Workers now serve Rodney, Mid Auckland, North Shore, South Auckland, West Auckland and Central Auckland.** However, due to financial constraints, staff voluntarily agree to a 10% cut in hours and wages. The society takes to social media and sets up a Facebook page. The last Art for MS exhibition is held at the EDGE, Aotea Centre. Graham and Judith Wear host a BBQ for all members – which becomes an annual event. Tina French attends the Brain Awareness Week at the University of Auckland. Hundreds of people attend research lectures.

day. The first 3T MRI scanner is installed at Auckland Hospital.

**2007 Neil Woodhams is elected as President of the MS Auckland Society** and Graham Wear, Vice President. MS North Shore Society holds its last event, a member's dinner at Duder's in Devonport, celebrating 30 years history.

**2008 MS North Shore and MS Auckland societies amalgamate.**

Nineteen organisations are represented, including MS Auckland. Meet Murphy, MS Auckland Society fundraising event, held at the Rendezvous Hotel in Auckland city.

**2010 David Ashton publishes his book 'Crippin Place'.** Chef and TV personality Peta Mathias celebrates her 60th birthday as a fundraiser for

the society. The event took place in the newly renovated top level of Auckland Museum. Mathias also becomes the first MS Ambassador for the MS Auckland region. The event raised \$9,000 for the field worker support programme. Members David Ashton and Tina French (and their respective partners) feature in Open Door, a TV documentary, screening on TV 3.

**2011 The Society's head office moves from Taylors Rd in Kingsland to the Mayfield Centre in Glenfield.** Tina French resigns. Fiona D'Young (MS Nurse at Auckland Hospital) starts her own regular column in the newsletter. Annual retreats are held with guest speakers, and water walking and Nordic walking with sticks classes start up. TV character Dr Sarah Potts, played by actor Amanda Billing on Shortland Street, becomes the face of the MS national Annual Appeal. The inaugural Telstra Clear Bike the Bridge challenge is held. The event is the first approved cycle ride over the Auckland Harbour Bridge since it opened in 1959, 9,000 cyclists take part.



Fiona D'Young



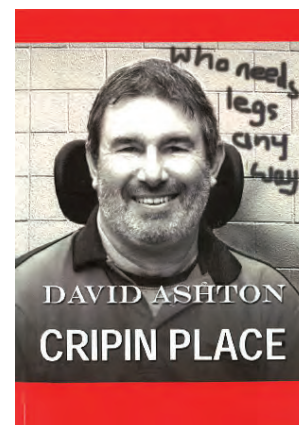
**2012 MS Auckland adopts national branding and gets a new logo.** Gary McMahon resigns as General Manager and is replaced by Thérèse Russel. A National MS Incidence study is launched in NZ. 'Hilda the Honda'; new car is added to the MS fleet with a grant from Pub Charity.

**2013 The MS Auckland Society now has 539 members.** Band of the Royal Marines London performs for MS Auckland Society fundraiser with 1,300 tickets sold. MS Auckland Society wins a new Toyota Corolla car.

**2014 The Inaugural Fidelity Life Buoy for MS Auckland fundraising lunch is held at the RNZYS.** MC was Peter Montgomerie and speakers were people with MS, David Barnes, Rick Dodson, and Graeme Sinclair. MSNZ hosts BDO fundraising event with a six day ride from Wellington to Auckland, Pharmac expands its list of treatments available for people with MS and two new treatments Gilenya and Tysabri are introduced across NZ. John and Lorraine Street were made



MS North Shore's 25th anniversary







Ambassadors of MS Auckland. Dr Jennifer Pereira joins Dr Ernie Willoughby as a Patron of MS Auckland

#### 2015 Oceans of Hope visits New

**Zealand** which coincided with a luncheon at the New Zealand Royal Yacht Squadron to mark Multiple Sclerosis Auckland's 50th year anniversary. For World MS Day the Sky Tower in Auckland is lit up bright orange. The Multiple Sclerosis New Zealand Research Trust is re-established and launched. The initial New Zealand Multiple Sclerosis Research Trust was established using funding from MSNZ and MS Auckland to support MS research. Two new disease modifying treatments, Tecfidera and Aubagio were made available locally and free to approved people with MS by Pharmacia. The MS Auckland offices moved from a cramped space in Glenfield to a much more suitable community lease offices in Takapuna, thanks to the generosity of the Devonport Takapuna Local Board. CEO Thérèse Russel was farewelled and GM Ingrid Minett was employed.

**2016 Georga Forgac, Field Worker for West Auckland farewelled after 11 years of service**, to move to the Waikato. MS Auckland magazine 'Multiple News' reaches over 600 homes. Only 8% of MS Auckland's operating expenses are received through a Disability Information and Advisory contract with the Ministry of Health, necessitating fund-raising of one sort or another to raise the remaining 92% each year.

**2017 Lady Raewyn Henry agrees to become an MS Auckland Ambassador.** Annual 'Laughter is the Best Medicine' comedy night event is started by person with MS Sam Smith. MS Auckland starts

providing group counselling sessions around Auckland.

**2018 Bike the Bridge fundraising event for MS Auckland was held for the final time** after running several times since 2011. The NZ MS Research

Trust takes over responsibility for running the annual MS Research Day from MS Auckland after five years of successful research events. Advertising agency Hunch's 'MS can make easy things hard' awareness campaign is launched. Diane Hampton, Field Worker for the North Shore, retires after 14 years of dedicated service. MS Auckland was the beneficiary of the Lion's Club of Remuera's Magic Show and the funds raised allowed the purchase of two replacement Field Worker vehicles.

**2019 A Special General Meeting is held to amend the MS Auckland constitution.** Dianne Barlett, Field Worker for South Auckland retires after 12 years of service. After 50 years, the Field Worker role name is changed to MS Community Advisor. MS Auckland's annual Street Appeal is not run due to Covid restrictions and is never restarted. MS Auckland runs a 'Txt to Give' fundraising campaign which is promoted by TV3's 'The Project.' Comedian and PwMS, Sam Smith becomes an MS Auckland Ambassador.

**2020 Lockdowns give the organisation time to bed in new database** and contact relationship management software, Infodile which improved communications with community, enhanced reporting, and streamlined services.

Neil Woodhams stands down as President of MS Auckland after 17 years of involvement on the Committee. Neil remains involved on a national level with MSNZ and the NZMS Research Trust. Jan Hollway becomes MS Auckland President. MS members enter into the Auckland Round the

Bays walk/ run event. Volunteer Peer Support programme is established to connect people affected by MS in similar situations.

**2021 Substantial bequests received in the past three years have ensured continuity of services** and financial stability through the challenging pandemic years. MS Auckland continues to pivot the delivery of many of our services to virtual including the AGM and Newly Diagnosed Day. Immediate past committee President Neil Woodhams is acknowledged in the Queen's Birthday honours list with a NZ Order of Merit for his services to multiple sclerosis. General Manager, Ingrid Minett resigns due to ill health and passes away from cancer. The Nomad's Golf Club donate a brand-new vehicle, a Toyota Yaris Cross, to MS Auckland to serve the MS community. Gibbs Farm grants MS Auckland a sculpture trail fundraising day. General Manager, Nicola Bitossi is employed.

**2022 A programme of monthly Informational Webinars** is commenced. MS Auckland ceases administering hydrotherapy due to declining numbers and health and safety challenges. An exercise support fund is established to address financial barriers to accessing MS-specific group exercises. MS Auckland worked with ASB and Deloitte to create a Customer Journey Map for people affected by MS to improve services to the community. An annual Awareness Walk for MS at Auckland Domain is established with 150 participants attending. The criteria for people with Progressive MS to access DMTs is adjusted, enabling some previously unmedicated people with MS to begin treatment.

**2023 aHSCT, a stem cell treatment that has been used overseas for 20 years is used in NZ** for the first time for a person with MS. MS Auckland Ambassador of 10 years, John Street, dies. MS Bay of Plenty and MS Rotorua and Lakes join Multiple News as contributing regions.

**2024 MS Auckland joins with Rotary Kaipātiki to support their annual Charity Book Fair.**

MS Auckland website is relaunched. A virtual interactive fundraiser is produced by AUT students, along with 'scrambled' video, still and radio awareness campaigns and video stories of five members. MSIS-29 measure of Quality of Life is administered for first time to better support individual navigation of MS journeys. MS Auckland is selected as a beneficiary charity for Dame Wendy Pye's autobiography. Harcourts Cooper & Co organises 'Locker Room Laughs' event at Birkenhead Football Club in support of MS Auckland.

**2025 MS Auckland celebrates 60th Anniversary.**

*Disclaimer: This historical timeline does not provide a definitive history of the MS Auckland Society or that of the North Shore Society, it provides an insight into key moments in each society's history and highlights from when the societies' merged in 2008 onwards. Material has been sourced from oral history interviews, newsletter archives, newspaper clippings and historic photos.*

