



February 16, 2016

Wheelchair no barrier to swimming fundraiser

Louise Schutz wishes that more of the world were covered with water. The 45 year-old was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) in 1998 and while her symptoms have left her wheelchair bound, she is able to walk in water. This is something she hopes will help her take part in the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Western Australia's (MSWA) fundraising event - Swim for MS Bunbury.

Louise was living interstate when she was diagnosed with relapsing-remitting MS and found it hard to find support because her family and friends were in denial about her condition. Her symptoms meant she couldn't see or walk straight and she felt like she was drunk at 10 in the morning. Her condition meant her now 25 year old son had to grow up fast and was administering her treatment injections when he was only eight years old.

Now living in Manjimup, Louise says locals are very helpful, very accommodating of her needs and appreciative of her artistic talents.

Louise says MSWA's South West presence has been a great source of support. She regularly visits the Bunbury Outreach Centre for treatment and to meet with others living with MS. She also receives weekly visits from carers.

"They are great, they really listen to our wants and needs. I really enjoy going down there and having a laugh," said Louise.

Almost \$120,000 has been raised for people living with MS and other neurological conditions in the South West in the three years that the Swim for MS Bunbury has been running.

"The good thing is that the money raised from the Swim for MS Bunbury stays in the South West and allows MSWA to continue providing services to people like Louise. Money from the swim will be used to help build the new \$1.5 million Bunbury Community and Health Services Centre, which will be a one-stop shop for people living with MS and other neurological conditions" said MSWA CEO, Marcus Stafford.

"The new MSWA Community and Health Services Centre in Bunbury will greatly improve my experience with the Society. We'll have room to move and spaces to park our cars, both of which are lacking in the current facilities," added Louise.

Previously a 10-hour event, this year, the Swim for MS Bunbury will be a 4-hour event. It's being held on Sunday, March 20 at the South West Sports Centre, Rotary Avenue, Bunbury.

Registrations are available online before 4pm Friday, 18 March 2016.

Registration fees are:

Adults	\$30 each
Juniors (15yrs and under)	\$25 each

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To register or donate to the Swim for MS Bunbury, go to www.swimforms.org.au

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MSWA Stats

- MSWA contributed \$1.5 million to research this year with \$500,000 dedicated to research projects based in Western Australia. MSWA is the largest funder of MS research nationally.
- This year MSWA provided over 560,000 care service hours to people living with MS and other neurological conditions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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