



February 4, 2016

## **New MS centre a one-stop shop**

The CEO of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of WA (MSWA), Marcus Stafford and Bunbury Mayor Gary Brennan today turned the first sod for the new Multiple Sclerosis Society of WA's Community and Health Services Centre Bunbury. The \$1.5 million Centre will be a one-stop shop for people with multiple sclerosis and similar neurological conditions.

It will offer physiotherapy, occupational therapy, personal assessments, counselling, nursing, group programs like fatigue management, Outreach group sessions, peer support gatherings, information sessions, a base for staff coordinating support for people living at home and staff orientation and training workshops.

"This is a fantastic occasion for us. We're very keen to get work started on the Centre as soon as possible and we're hoping that by this time next year, the doors will be open and that it is fully operational," said Mr Stafford.

"We've outgrown our current Bunbury Outreach centre and we're finding that demand for our services in the South West continues to grow. We currently have 234 Members in the region, not including their family and carers, who will all be able to access a wide range of services at the purpose built Centre. With the roll-out of the National Disability Insurance scheme people with other neurological conditions will also be able to receive services from the Centre.

"I'd like to thank the public for their donations and continued support, including for the Mega Home Lottery that has allowed us to build this new facility as well as increasing the range of services we provide and the amount of money we invest in research to find the cause and cure for MS."

The Centre will also include a physiotherapy gym with a tilt table, a motomed limb exerciser, parallel bars, exercise bikes, gym equipment, massage rooms, disability access toilets and therapy rooms for group sessions.

Lynda Whitton was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1996 and is President of the Bunbury Outreach Group and a National Advocate for MS Australia. The Leschenault local said she and other Members are looking forward to the new Centre and the services it will provide.

"It will be lovely to have all of the services under one roof. Where we currently are is basically a modified house, so it's not ideal for people in wheelchairs and the physio room doubles-up as a counselling room. And rather than having to make an appointment or have someone come to visit, in the new Centre we'll just be able to knock on the counsellor's door and have a five-minute chat," said Lynda.

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“Another good thing will be having plenty of parking for everyone. I think some people might be currently put off coming to our current Outreach centre, especially if you’re in a wheelchair or a walker, because there isn’t enough parking.

“I’d also like to thank the people of the South West who donated to the yearly Swim for MS in Bunbury. In our first year alone we raised more than \$55,000 and all of the money from the swims has gone towards helping us to relocate to this new Centre, so please keep supporting us because every little bit helps.”

In September 2014, Lynda’s husband Colin, died in a workplace accident, the company he worked for, BHP Billiton, has donated \$80,000 towards the fitting out of the new Centre.

Mr Stafford said that the Bunbury Centre was part of the organisation’s strategic growth plan.

“We’ve found that the number of people using our high-support respite and accommodation facility at Treendale has grown and I predict that we’ll see the same thing happen in Bunbury,” added Mr Stafford.

“To manage the growing demand, over the coming years we have a major building program planned, both in the metropolitan area and regional Western Australia. As well as bricks and mortar we also want to keep on increasing the services we can provide to our Members and the number of hours’ worth of services that we provide.”

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