



STROKE RECOVERY  
ASSOCIATION NSW

# CLUB NEWS

## Spring 2025

### FROM MICHELLE'S DESK

Hello to you all,

This is the last edition of Club news for 2025, and as we draw the year to a close, I realise what a busy year it has been. Unfortunately for us here at the Association, this has not changed, and things will not slow down.

On Monday we were informed by the Department of Communities and Justice that the tender process for the Clubs Coordinator position is now open and we are required to resubmit a 5 year tender requirement by the 8 December 2025. This is a huge process and as you can imagine throws our winddown plans for the end of the year out the window.

In addition, we were informed yesterday that the Commonwealth government will be holding a consultation process about an Advocacy Programme they are to implement in 2026. They would like your input as it very much impacts your lives, particularly those of you who are receiving NDIS funding. A two-month consultation over the Christmas period. What does that tell you? I have been doing this for a few years now and what that tells me is that they do not want people to respond and hope the consultation gets overlooked because everyone is busy at this time. Please, if you have some spare time, have a look at what they are proposing and let me know if you would like your opinion included in the Associations response.

What is happening with my position and my retirement plans? The board has advertised and we were successful in finding a replacement. However she declined the offer of employment. The Board decided that we will begin the process again in January 2026, so you are stuck with me a little longer I am afraid. I am hopeful that 2026 will be a very positive year for the Association and I am looking forward to introducing to you a wonderful replacement to me who will take the Association to the next level of development.

Have a wonderful Christmas and New year everyone and enjoy this lovely quiet period with your family. Stay safe and I look forward to catching up with you all in early 2026.

*Kind regards,  
Michelle*



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Association NSW








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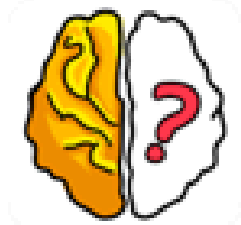




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# Useful FREE apps for Stroke survivors

The following FREE apps can be downloaded from the Google Play Store (for Android devices) and/or the Apple App Store (for Apple devices):

App Name	Description
 <p><b>Small Talk Aphasia (Male/Female)</b></p>	<p>Free app for practising speech and assisting in conversation on the go. It has common phrases and video to assist with communication.</p> <p>*Available on Apple App Store only</p>
 <p><b>Small Talk Conversation</b></p>	<p>Free app with common conversation phrases to assist with communication.</p> <p>*Available on Apple App Store only</p>
 <p><b>Claro Speak</b></p>	<p>Free app that assists with text to speech. Type in anything in the notes and play it aloud.</p>
 <p><b>Small Talk Oral Exercise</b></p>	<p>Free app with multiple oral exercises to assist language skills.</p> <p>*Available on Apple App Store only</p>
 <p><b>Sono Flex Lite</b></p>	<p>Free app that assists with communication through images, text to talk, and stringing a few images together.</p> <p>*Available on Apple App Store only</p>

 <p><b>Elevate</b></p>	<p>Free brain training app that focuses on memory and cognitive functioning. The app will adapt the game based on your skill level.</p>
 <p><b>Lumosity: Brain Training</b></p>	<p>Free brain training app. The app will adapt the game based on your skills which are tested at the beginning to understand your baseline.</p>
 <p><b>Category Therapy Lite</b></p>	<p>Free cognitive and memory game. Very user friendly.</p>
 <p><b>Brain Out</b></p>	<p>Free app to assist with cognitive development using visual riddles.</p>
 <p><b>Calm</b></p>	<p>Free meditation and sleep app to assist with wellbeing and mental health.</p>
 <p><b>Peak - Brain Training</b></p>	<p>Free app designed to help you expand your mental skills with 45+ fun and rewarding games.</p> <p>*Available on Apple App Store only</p>

# DISABILITY ADVOCACY CONSULTATION

## November 2025 to January 2026

### EDITORS NOTE:

Over the Christmas/New year period the Australian Government will be holding consultations regarding a new programme they are developing which will impact you and will certainly impact the Association. Please note the time frame. I know many of you are busy with family and holidays during the holiday season however, I would urge you to follow up and gain further information from the website below and if you have any ideas please feel free send them off to us here at the Association or present them directly though the consultation plan. Below is the information we have received to share with you.

### Background

The Australian Government committed to a range of funding to build a more inclusive Australia for people with disability as part of the first phase of our response to the Disability Royal Commission.

This included additional funding of \$39.7 million to establish a new Commonwealth individual disability advocacy program in 2026.

Disability advocacy plays a vital role in protecting the rights of people with disability. It empowers individuals to understand their rights and speak up.

Individual disability advocacy is where a person gets one-on-one support to resolve an instance of unfair treatment or abuse. This support can be delivered by a professional advocate, or a family member, friend or volunteer with support from an advocacy organisation.

The new program will aim to make sure that individual people with disability, especially those most at risk of harm, get the support they need to make their own choices and stand up for their rights.

To help us develop and design the new program, we want to hear from:

- people with disability, their families, carers and kin
- disability advocacy organisations and advocates
- disability service providers.

The public consultation will run from 17 November 2025 to 16 January 2026.

To find out more about the consultation visit:

<https://consultations.health.gov.au/disability-and-carers-group/individual-disability-advocacy-reform/>

### Contact

For more information about the Individual Disability Advocacy Program consultation or this stakeholder kit email: [DisabilityAdvocacyReforms@health.gov.au](mailto:DisabilityAdvocacyReforms@health.gov.au)

# Stroke Awareness Week Launch

This year the launch of Stroke Awareness Week on 8<sup>th</sup> September was held at Royal Rehab Ryde to promote the 'Stroke of a Pen' Showcase, a literary collection of short stories, songs and poems from our members. We had good attendance from a variety of areas as well as health professionals. The theme for this year's Stroke Awareness Week was 'Survive, Recover, Thrive', a theme which reflects the often-difficult journey travelled by survivors of Stroke and their families. The stories, songs and poems were inspired by one or more of those central themes.

Many of the writers of the submissions attended and we were treated to a wonderful performance by Vincenzo Pandolfie, who preformed two songs he wrote for his wife Elaine. Vincenzo and Elaine were members of the Sydney Inner West Stroke Club for many years.

You can read the wonderful submissions here:



**SCAN  
ME!**



Below are a collection of photographs from the launch.



# Creating Connections Conference

On Wednesday the 10th of September 2025 the Stroke Recovery Association NSW held its annual Creating Connections Conference. This year's theme was "Survive, Recover, Thrive", with the day featuring presentations from some brilliant members of the Stroke community. This year had an Aphasia focus.

The day began with a presentation on Understanding Communication after Stroke by Chelsea Larkman, a senior speech pathologist from Concord Repatriation General Hospital. Chelsea discussed communication disorders after Stroke and strategies to aid communication with people with Aphasia.

We next had Alejandra Casarotti, a speech pathologist from Royal Rehab Ryde, Lifeworks present 'New Technologies in the Treatment of Aphasia'. Alejandra went through some of the new developments and information technology that is being implemented for speech rehabilitation, including some that can be done at home.

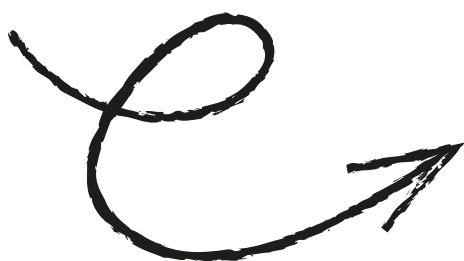
Each of the stall holder spoke briefly about their organisations and the wonderful work they do with Stroke Survivors in a variety of areas. We were lucky to have representatives from Concentric Rehab, Guide Dogs, Royal Rehab Lifeworks, SmartStep Stroke program and NeuroHub.

Our final morning presentation was from distinguished speaker Dr Teresa Anderson, AM, former CEO of the SLHD and current CEO of the Single Digit Patient Record Implementation Authority. Teresa spoke to members about the new developments coming to manage records, the timelines for implementation and the role they will play in improving healthcare.

After lunch a panel of current and former health professionals spoke in an informative discussion "Stroke then and now" - celebrating the development of Stroke services in NSW. They discussed some of the developments over the years in Stroke care and how they hope care will progress in the future.

The day ended with presentations on the changes to My Aged Care and the NDIS systems. Aged Care Consultant and a member of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Club, Ingrid Fairle discussed what is changing and staying the same for your MyAgedCare packages and how this will affect you. Then Michelle Sharkey presented on Michael Hampton's behalf for the changes coming to the NDIS system. This addressed legislative and policy changes which have or are about to come into effect.

Scan the QR code below to view recordings off all the day's presentations, as well as a highlights reel. Thank you to all of our presenters, stallholders and attendees for another successful year of Creating Connections!



**SCAN  
ME**



# Hunter Stroke Olympics

On Tuesday 14th October 2025 the annual Hunter Stroke Olympics was held at Raymond Terrace Bowling Club. A day of fierce competition and fun, the Hunter Olympics is an integral part of our yearly events calendar.

Our club champions were Maitland Aphasia Communication Group, congratulations! Congratulations also to the Battler of the Year Georgina Blythe from Woy Woy, our Carer of the Year Debra Morgan-Cruz from Belmont, and our Volunteer of the Year, Brock Everingham from Tamworth.

We would also like to extend a huge thank you to the students and staff from Newcastle University who volunteered on the day. We greatly appreciate their help each year.

Congratulations to all of our medallists, and to everyone who attended. The Olympics are not just about winning, but about camaraderie, socialisation, and Stroke recovery. Everyone's absolute best performances were given, thank you!

	<b>Gold</b>	<b>Silver</b>	<b>Bronze</b>
<b>Carpet Bowls</b>	Ernie Whipper MACG	Robin Tapara WAGS	Noel Higgs Woy Woy
<b>Euchre</b>	Ross Ferris MACG	Tom Morgan WAGS	Phil Christie GLAMS
<b>Dominoes</b>	Carol Goldsworthy MACG	Robert Carpenter Belmont	Kimberly Morgan-Cruz Belmont
<b>Card Memory</b>	Bob Smith Woy Woy	Ida Hatch WYSS	Jie Zhong Hornsby
<b>Skittles</b>	Pauline Saxby WAGS	Annie Lovitt MACG	John Tass WAGS
<b>Quoits</b>	Carol Goldsworthy MACG	Michael Fairleigh MACG	Clinton Davey MACG
<b>Toss the Bean Bag</b>	Pat Curray MACG	Elaine Ferris MACG	Ava DeZeeuw WYSS
<b>Tin Can Pong (C)</b>	Dave Rooney WAGS	Mithlesh Agarwal Hornsby	Tom Parkhouse Hornsby
<b>Putting (SS)</b>	Noel Higgs Woy Woy	Rachel Parsons MACG	Robin Tapara WAGS
<b>Putting (C)</b>	Joellen Garbutt WAGS	Phil Baxter GLAMS	Annita Inns WAGS
<b>Ball in a Box</b>	Michael Fairleigh MACG	Ernie Whipper MACG	Jo Boswell MACG

# Hunter Stroke Olympics



# Annual General Meeting

This year's annual general meeting was held at Club Burwood RSL on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2025. Congratulations to all elected board members.

We would especially like to welcome Kimone Haddon to the Board. Kimone is the President of the Bega Stroke Recovery Club. Kimone became a member of the Association in 2015 after her 2<sup>nd</sup> Stroke. Kimone is eager to represent rural members, younger Stroke Survivors as well as to advocate for Aphasia awareness. Welcome Kimone!

The Association's annual report has also been finalised. Copies have been sent out to club secretaries if you wish to view the report and are available on our website to review.

## Your 2025 Board

### Stroke Survivors



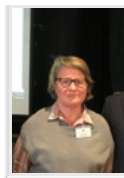
John Garbutt



John Tass



Professor Shih-  
Chang  
(Ming) Wang



Kimone  
Haddon

### Non-Stroke Survivors



Karen  
Felton



Kylie Tastula



Judy Sumner

## COMBINED CLUBS PICNIC



Our final event in this year's calendar was the Combined Clubs Picnic held at Sydney Olympic Park's Wentworth Common on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November. A fun day to top off a full year of events, the picnic is a great opportunity for members to connect and socialise.

After a cloudy start the sun came out and the barbeque was manned under blue skies. Weather was warm but a light breeze kept conditions lovely. The picnic was attended by members from Fairfield, Sydney Inner West, Macarthur, Penrith and Hornsby Clubs.



Attendees very much enjoyed walking around the walking track in the warm afternoon sun and Michelle entertained us with Trivia after feasting on a BBQ. Thankfully the venue was largely wildlife free and people expressed their desire to return again next year. It was a wonderful way to cap off a busy year and we look forward to seeing all of you and more again next year.

# Around the Clubs

## GREAT LAKES AND MANNING - GLAMS

The HSO is held every October, and all Stroke Recovery Clubs in the New England Area are invited to attend. This year we had 7 clubs with up to 10 Stroke survivors from each club can attend. Each Stroke survivor is required to select a game to participate in, in the morning and a different game after lunch. Carers and volunteers have Carer/Putting Comp. We were fortunate this year, Phil Baxter won silver in the Carer's Putting competition and Phil Christie won bronze in Euchre, congratulations to you both and our other members that gave it their all.



The Great Lakes and Manning Stroke Recovery Club was once again able to attend the Hunter Stroke Olympics (HSO) thanks to the support of the community with donations and supporting our raffles, Club Forster with their in-kind support and their Clubs Grants funding project funded us this year, along with many local Not for Profit organisations and charities and is open to registered self-help clubs to apply for funding for special projects.

Our Stroke Recovery Club is a self-help club registered with the Stroke Recovery Association of NSW which looks after our governance. The clubs have been founded to provide support for Stroke Survivors, their Carers and family living in our community.

The GLAMS Stroke Recovery Club meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of each month at Club Forster. The meeting starts at 2.00pm - 4.00pm, however they often meet for lunch before the meeting. For more information please contact 1300 650 594.

## KEYSTROKES CHOIR

On Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> October, the Keystrokes Choir held a performance at Royal North Shore Hospital for World Stroke Day, which was on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> October.

11 members of the Choir performed, watched on by their family members, carers and hospital staff and visitors who were passing by. They sang a number of songs, and their joy and pleasure in performing was obvious to all. It was a wonderful morning with lots of fun and laughter.

Thanks to everyone involved, the choir is definitely looking forward to more events like this.

If you want to join the Keystrokes Choir, it is held in Crows Nest every Thursday morning from 10.45am to 11.45am. Contact 1300 650 594 for more information.



# Around the Clubs

## SYDNEY INNER WEST

The Sydney Inner West Club's November meeting fell on Melbourne Cup Day, and they hosted a lunch to watch the Melbourne Cup race as their meeting for this month. The Club attended their usual venue where they were able to play trivia and enjoy the entertainment provided by the Club for the Melbourne Cup. Members of the Club attended the lunch and stayed to watch the 'race that stops the nation.'

The Club had some wonderful platters prepared by Briar's Sports specifically made for Melbourne Cup and was well attended by members.

The Club dressed up with their fancy hats for the day and enjoyed their day in which they were able to share a drink and a laugh before watching the race together. The Club were fortunate to have the lunch platters covered by the ClubsGrants funds from Briar's Sports and were grateful to be able to use some of it at the club on this wonderful day.

The Club meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 11am at Briar's Sports Club in Concord. For more information, please contact 1300 650 594.



## TAMWORTH

The Tamworth group hosted two awareness information and stalls in September for Stroke Awareness Week around Tamworth.

The group were very pleased with the attendance rates and keen interest of the members of the Tamworth community to receive information for their Club for future events.

The Tamworth Club host a variety of events and activities throughout the year to raise awareness for the Tamworth community and to engage members in the local community.







The Club meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 10am at Wests Tamworth. For more information, please contact 1300 650 594.



# Upcoming Events



## 2026 EVENTS

<b>18 JUNE</b> THURSDAY	<b>SYDNEY STROKE OLYMPICS</b> Club Burwood RSL	
<b>8 AUGUST</b> SATURDAY	<b>COMBINED CLUBS MORNING TEA</b> Diggers The Entrance	
<b>STROKE AWARENESS WEEK NSW</b> <b>SUN 6 - SAT 12 SEPTEMBER</b>		
<b>11 SEPTEMBER</b> FRIDAY	<b>CREATING CONNECTIONS STROKE CONFERENCE</b> Club Burwood RSL	
<b>13 OCTOBER</b> TUESDAY	<b>HUNTER STROKE OLYMPICS</b> Venue TBD	
<b>6 NOVEMBER</b> FRIDAY	<b>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</b> Venue TBD, Tamworth	
<b>13 NOVEMBER</b> FRIDAY	<b>COMBINED CLUBS PICNIC</b> Wentworth Commons, Homebush	



**STROKE RECOVERY ASSOCIATION NSW**



1300 650 594



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### Complaints Process

The Stroke Recovery Association is an open and inclusive organisation and the board welcomes your feedback and reviews on the Associations services.

If you have any issues or complaints regarding the treatment you receive through the associations staff or programs please contact the CEO Michelle Sharkey on 1300 650 594.

All complaints received and issues raised are monitored and discussed by the board monthly.

### Contributions

We welcome contributions to Club News, especially in our "Around the Clubs" section of the newsletter.

Submissions should be sent to [admin@strokensw.org.au](mailto:admin@strokensw.org.au).

Contributions may be edited, either to reduce size, to assist with readability, or for legal/liability reasons. To include something in our next Club News, please send it into our office before 1 February 2026

### Memorial gifts & bequests

A bequest is a gift in your will. If you would like to consider how you can include the Stroke Recovery Association NSW as a beneficiary in your will, please contact the office at [admin@strokensw.org.au](mailto:admin@strokensw.org.au) or on 1300 65 594.

We can also supply 'In Memoriam' donation brochures with pre-paid addressed envelopes for use at memorial services.

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