

Hi, I'm Hobbsy,



Living a full life in spite of Multiple Sclerosis

At dawn on 1st January 2000 I ran my first and only marathon. I had been planning to run the Hamilton Millennium Marathon for a few months – this was my big moment!

It was a lot tougher than I had expected but finished! Not in a world beating time – but I got across the finish line! The last few Ks I had been struggling with what I thought was a tight hamstring and was dragging my right leg.

This turned out to be the first sign something wasn't quite right. I recovered from the day and over the next few weeks/years found it more and more difficult to run without stopping and stretching. Eventually I would run a few steps and trip over.

The Doctors couldn't find anything wrong even after x-rays, physio and even an operation on my right hip for some damage from running! By this stage its 2005 – 5 years post the marathon and still not running – managing to hop-run!

The Specialist who sorted my hip then sent me to a mate of his – a neurologist. The Neurologist did a number of tests and after a second visit diagnosed something called - Multiple Sclerosis?!

Shock horror – what is MS? I had no idea. I needed to get my head around this and so my wife and I decided to sell the business we owned and ran on a day to day basis.

A family friend – also with MS – put me in touch with George Jelinek's work and I started following his recommendations as best I could. At the same time I had also changed my Neurologist to a Hamilton based specialist and it was he who confirmed my diagnosis and that I had Primary Progressive MS. This was in 2006.

I have had this battle for the best part of 20 years and initially it just gave me a limp on my right side. Over the years it has progressed and now I use two walking sticks most of the time and have developed issues with my toes "clawing" so to help with my balance. I write this two weeks after having a small operation on two toes that involved minor amputations to help with pain and the "clawing".

I still work a full week and have done most of the past 20 years – I am married to a loving and supportive lady and we have two great kids, live on a lifestyle block and I belong to a Historical Re-enactment Society. I consider I live a full, happy, contented life – if somewhat held back by my lack of free movement.

I joined MS Waikato so as to be able to connect with people in similar positions and/or who understood my position. Keeping up with developments around treatment and ways to help manage the illness are also key aspects to joining. The Trust connects a group of people who otherwise would be battling alone and helps them to feel "normal" again and that people do

want to help and care. They are not alone. There is nothing like talking to someone who “gets it” – the frustration and sometimes – disappointment that goes along with battling MS.

I encourage you to donate to support the great work the MS Trust does across our region. Without the Trusts help and support many people with MS would be far worse off both physically and emotionally.

Multiple Sclerosis is a real test of your character and even the most confident and self-assured person has need of help, support and advice at times. Without the support of donations the Trust couldn't continue to the fantastic work it does. Please show your support. We need your help.

Thank you for your interest and any support you can provide.

MS Waikato is a charitable Trust providing support, education, information and advocacy services to people affected with Multiple Sclerosis and allied neurological conditions throughout the Waikato and Coromandel.

Covid -19 has impacted on funding and our ability to fundraise this year. You too can support MS Waikato and the services we provide by making a donation directly to MS Waikato account number 02 0316 0488196 000 or through givealittle <https://bit.ly/3biZh7j>.