

Severe ME Month 2026

Webinar Event

Understanding ME

How to Care for Severe ME



Saturday, 29 August 2026

Start at 3:00 pm (Brisbane time)

Program:

Speaker	Time	Length	Topic
Opening			
Julie Hughes	03:00 pm	15 min	Welcome. Acknowledgement to country. Housekeeping
How to Care for Severe ME			
Dr David Fineberg, MBBS FRACGP DCH	3:15 pm	45 min	Energy-Limiting and Post-Infection Conditions Dr Fineberg In this pre-recorded presentation, Dr Fineberg introduces the vision for his ME Research Clinic and reflects on the work of the RACGP Specific Interest Group in Energy-Limiting and Post-Infection Conditions. He shares thoughtful, experience-based insights into how clinicians can provide safe, appropriate care for people living with severe and very severe ME.
Niti Prakash Clare Batkin	4:00 pm	60 min	SDA Overview and Supportive housing for people with severe Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Niti and Clare present a coordinated session on Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) for people living with severe and very severe Myalgic Encephalomyelitis.

			Their presentation outlines key SDA design considerations, safety requirements, and evidence expectations for Home and Living requests.
Melanie Weeks	5:00 pm	30 min	The NDIS Amendment (Integrity and Safeguarding) Act 2026 Melanie provides a concise overview of the key changes introduced in the new NDIS Amendment Act. She also offers insights into what these reforms mean for people with severe and very severe ME, including practical steps participants and clinicians can take to prepare for the transition.
Dr Stanley Du Preez, MD, PhD	5:30 pm	30 min	Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) Diagnosis Pathway Dr Du Preez shares his knowledge and insights to help GPs and patients navigate confirming an ME-ICC diagnosis. He outlines how GPs and specialists can use the ME-ICP to confirm ME and assess severity, noting that ME-ICP severity classifications differ from ME-ICC. The session also provides practical guidance for managing ME in clinical settings and clarifies the role of immunology and allergy specialists in diagnosis and care planning.
Understanding ME			
Dr Etienne Martini Sasso, PhD	06:00 pm	30 min	NCNED Research Updates A pre-recorded presentation by Dr Etienne Martini Sasso, sharing recent findings from NCNED's neuroimmune research program.
Closing			
Julie Hughes	6:30 pm	10 min	Closing Speech

Presenters:

Host	Bio
Julie Hughes 	Julie Hughes brings over thirty years of occupational therapy experience, with a deep and enduring commitment to supporting people with ME. She trained in Brisbane and later worked in the UK for many years before returning to Queensland in 2017 to join the Occupational Therapy program at the Australian Catholic University as a Lecturer. Julie serves as MEGA's Occupational Therapy Advisor and offers ME-focused Telehealth support through her private practice, ME Exhaustion Management by Telehealth.

How to Care for Severe ME Presenters	Bio
Dr David Fineberg, MBBS FRACGP DCH 	Dr David Fineberg is a General Practitioner and PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne, specialising in complex chronic illnesses including ME, Long COVID, POTS, and related neuroimmune and autonomic conditions. He is the founder of the ME Research Clinic, a dedicated service providing comprehensive assessment and management for ME and Long COVID, including support with NDIS, TPD, and DSP applications. His clinical work is complemented by an active research program focused on advancing understanding and treatment of these conditions.

Niti Prakash 	Niti Prakash is a lawyer, disability advocate, consultant who operates her own business but most importantly a single parent to a neurodiverse daughter who lives with multiple disabilities and is a NDIS participant, She brings deep, lived experience to every aspect of her work. Professionally, she has over four years of experience in the SDA sector and even more experience in the disability & NDIS sector as a parent of a child with multiple disabilities. Following a successful career as a property lawyer and working for national SDA providers, Niti now operates her own business, Disability Solutions & Outcomes and provides a range of services including advocacy support, NDIS legal advice, SDA participant procurement services and general SDA and NDIS advice. She is passionate about spreading education across the sector.
Clare Batkin 	Clare Batkin is an occupational therapist, clinical educator, sessional academic, and founder of Your OT Tutor. She serves as the MEGA Virtual Health Hub Lead, coordinating volunteer health professionals and students in the co-design of this emerging service model. Clare has over fifteen years of experience working with adult clients across public and private sectors, with recent work focused on Functional Capacity Assessments for NDIS participants. She is a self-proclaimed OT Nerd who loves sharing her enthusiasm for learning and evidence-based practice to help therapists grow in confidence and joy in their work.
Melanie Weeks 	Melanie Weeks is a Senior Occupational Therapist, who draws on both her clinical experience and lived experience of chronic, invisible conditions to inform her work. Melanie currently offers telehealth services across Australia and mobile home-based OT services in Melbourne, with a special interest in working with adults living with invisible disabilities and chronic neurological and musculoskeletal conditions. Melanie is a member of Occupational Therapy Australia, a member of the Occupational Therapy Society for Invisible Disabilities (OTSi), and regularly participates in peer to peer educational groups for allied health professionals working with invisible disabilities.

Dr Stanley Du Preez, MD, PhD 	Stanley is the volunteer Community Coordinator for ME Group Australia and brings a strong commitment to improving outcomes for people with ME. He works as a resident medical officer with Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service and completed his PhD at the National Centre for Neuroimmunology and Emerging Diseases, focusing on ME. Stanley also contributes to medical education as a clinical lecturer with Griffith University School of Medicine. He is passionate about advancing clinical care, research, and advocacy for ME and aims to specialise in immunology to support safe, effective, evidence-based care for patients.
Understanding ME Presenter	Bio
Dr Etianne Martini Sasso, PhD 	Etianne Martini Sasso is a Research Fellow at NCNED, Griffith University, with expertise spanning immunology, electrophysiology, pathology laboratory sciences, and public health. She completed her PhD in 2025, investigating TRPM3 ion channel dysfunction in ME, Post COVID-19 Condition, and Gulf War Illness. Her research also examined whether naltrexone could restore TRPM3 activity and improve symptoms and quality of life in people with Long COVID. Etianne brings a comprehensive biomedical perspective to emerging neuroimmune and post-infection conditions.



**Myalgic
Encephalomyelitis**
Group Australia



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