Autumn Edition
February 2026

InTouch with Epilepsy

A message from Nicole Coulthard, Chief Executive Officer

Having been part of this organisation for some time, I've seen firsthand the dedication, passion, and impact our staff, volunteers, and community bring every day. I'm excited to build on this strong foundation and work together to shape the future of support for people living with epilepsy.

I'd like to begin by thanking our incredible Op Shop staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly over the holiday period to keep our stores running – raising much-needed funds and awareness. At the same time, our Epilepsy Advisors continued providing essential support, ensuring people living with epilepsy could access information and guidance when they needed it.

The Epilepsy Foundation exists to ensure that people can live well with their epilepsy. This means continually finding better ways to provide meaningful support and raise awareness of the challenges epilepsy can bring.

My vision is a future where people living with epilepsy feel understood, heard and empowered. I'm committed to strengthening connections across our community, particularly in regional areas, and grow a network of engaged supporters. For me, this means being present, listening, and learning from your experiences as we work together to support the epilepsy community in new and impactful ways.

I'm passionate about finding bold ways to increase understanding and visibility of epilepsy.

Continued on page 2…

EPILEPSY FOUNDATION

SHADES OF PURPLE
ANNUAL CHARITY DINNER

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH

6:30PM

MORE THAN A MOMENT

Recognising the unseen moments of epilepsy and the strength that endures.

All-inclusive three-course dinner and drinks, entertainment, live auction and raffle

[illegible]

VIEW MORE INFORMATION AND PURCHASE TICKETS BY SCANNING THE QR CODE

A message from Nicole Coulthard, Chief Executive Officer continued...

Our Make March Purple campaign is a great example, with this year's Muck Up for Epilepsy theme encouraging people to step outside their comfort zones, get a little messy and stand with the 270,000 Australians affected by epilepsy. It shows that raising awareness isn't just important – it can be a lot of fun too.

We're also looking forward to connecting with our community at the Shades of Purple Charity Dinner on Thursday, 26 March. The evening supports initiatives that have a real impact on the lives of people living with epilepsy, helping us continue and expand innovative programs across education and support. Tickets are now available online, and with some great entertainment and speakers, it's sure to be a memorable night out.

Looking ahead, innovation will continue to guide our work. Programs like the New Diagnosis Pathway show how targeted support can make a real difference for families in the early stages. We're also exploring new digital ways to connect with more people — including young people — so support is accessible no matter who you are or where you live.

Education and training continue to be a core part of our work. By offering accessible courses for educators, carers, health professionals, and others supporting someone with epilepsy, we can strengthen understanding and confidence across the community. I encourage everyone to keep learning about epilepsy, and to talk openly about your experiences. This openness is key to reducing stigma and creating a more informed, supportive community.

I'm excited about what we can achieve together this year and the difference we can make in the lives of people living with epilepsy. Every idea, every contribution, and every moment of support brings us closer to a future where people can truly live well with epilepsy.

NCoulthard

Nicole Coulthard
Chief Executive Officer

Make March Purple 2026

Muck Up and Stand Out for Epilepsy this March

This March, Australians are invited to get a little messy for a powerful cause as Make March Purple 2026 launches with a bold new theme: Muck Up for Epilepsy. The campaign encourages people to step outside their comfort zones and stand with the 270,000 Australians whose lives are mucked up by epilepsy.

Throughout March, people are encouraged to take on the Purple Muck Challenge to raise awareness and vital funds for epilepsy services, education and research. The challenge invites people to embrace the mess and use it as a conversation starter about epilepsy and its impact on everyday life.

There are also plenty of other ways to get involved in Make March Purple! Participants can host their own purple-themed fundraiser, whether that's colouring their hair purple, painting their nails, baking purple treats or hosting a purple event. Any and every action this March will help spark important conversations and show solidarity with the epilepsy community.

A highlight of the campaign will be Purple Day on 26 March, a global event dedicated to epilepsy awareness. On this night, buildings and landmarks around Australia will light up purple in a powerful show of support for people living with epilepsy. The Epilepsy Foundation will also mark Purple Day by hosting its annual Shades of Purple Charity Dinner, bringing together supporters, partners and advocates committed to making a difference. Tickets to the dinner are currently available for purchase.

Whether you're mucking up, going purple or attending a special event, your involvement this March matters - because standing out can help change lives. Visit makemarchpurple.org.au for more information and to register.

Every day is different when you live with epilepsy.

A loyal, caring and big-hearted young man, Jackson has always been willing and ready to help others. In 2025 he signed up and took part in the Epilepsy Foundation's Walk for Epilepsy, helping to raise awareness and funds for people impacted by epilepsy. People just like him. This is Jackson's story.

"The day after my 18th birthday my parents had to take me to the doctors. Looking back, what we thought was a hangover was most likely my first seizure. Then throughout my 20s, we believe I had a number of absent seizures.

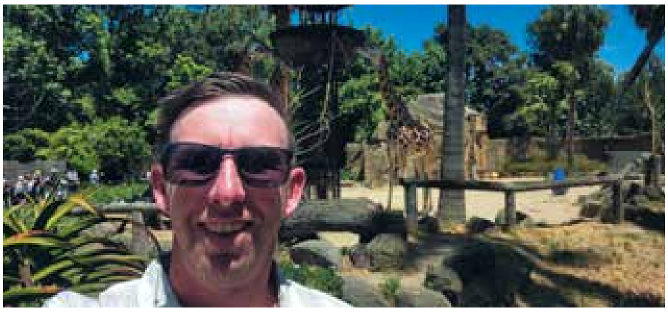
In July 2025, I had another seizure after an AFL game. I ended up in emergency. Over the following weeks, the doctors ran various tests to learn what was going on. **Finally, at 33 years of age, 15 years after my first seizure, I was officially diagnosed with generalised epilepsy.**

I'll admit that after learning of the diagnosis, I was a little relieved – I now knew what was going on with me. But I wasn't quite prepared for the impact epilepsy would have on my life, like times of loneliness and not being able to do things I used to do such as go for a drive on nice weekends.

Living with epilepsy means every day is different. Your mood and state of mind. The way you feel towards certain things. Being careful to not over-exert yourself. Having to adapt your life. Sometimes missing out on the things you love that your friends are doing. All so you don't trigger a seizure.

Yet having epilepsy has also changed my life in a positive way. Epilepsy has helped me to slow down as I work through the changes this condition is having on my life.

As someone who's recently been diagnosed, my advice to anyone who is living with epilepsy is to reach out. And for all of us to be kind to people with epilepsy.



You'll have days where you have no idea what's going on, or you'll feel like your life will never be the same. The biggest thing is reach out and talk to those around you, express how you're feeling and what you're going through. Surround yourself with people who love and care about you. I'm lucky as I have my parents who constantly support me, encourage me to relax and take everything as it comes.

And please seek support from organisations just like the Epilepsy Foundation. This is extremely important as they are here to help. They provide information, care and resources to learn how to best live with epilepsy. They train and educate families, friends, and the broader community. Thank you for reading my story."

"I live with epilepsy and..."

Living with epilepsy impacts every part of a person's life. But epilepsy does not define them. We're asking people to share what it means to live with epilepsy.
Like Jackson.

"I live with epilepsy and I'm proud to be part of a community that supports each other going through similar scenarios."

You too can share your thoughts on what it means to you to live with epilepsy. Please email pnicholls@epilepsyfoundation.org.au and complete the sentence 'I live with epilepsy and…'

A ‘beast’ of a condition. But Hunter won’t let it get him down.

Diagnosed with a rare condition which triggers seizures, Hunter has been living with epilepsy for the last six years. What he has experienced and undergone in that time has been both incredible and brave. This is his story.

“At the start of 2020, I suffered a seizure whilst at a mate’s place. I was 16 at the time. As a precaution I told my mum and she rushed me to the hospital where the seizures continued. The MRI showed I had a brain bleed. Airlifted to the Royal Children’s Hospital, they confirmed I had three cavernomas on my brain which caused the seizures.

I was prescribed medication to manage the seizures. Unfortunately, it didn't stop them. In 2022, at just 19 years old, I had my first brain surgery. Doctors removed one cavernoma, which they believed was causing the epilepsy. I was seizure free for 19 months until 2024, when I began to experience seizures again. With the epilepsy getting worse, in 2025 I was admitted to hospital where doctors removed another cavernoma.

Over the last six years I've been on 4 different types of medication, have had at least 21 severe tonic clonic seizures (excluding those I had in hospital), have dislocated and fractured my shoulder due to a seizure, and have had two brain surgeries. All by the age of 22. I admit I struggle to process this myself at times.

However, this hasn't stopped me. I'm in my final year of obtaining a Bachelor in Construction Management (Honours), work 40 hours a week at a construction firm, and have been able to maintain a social and healthy lifestyle.

This year I’m taking part in the Melbourne Marathon, fundraising for the Epilepsy Foundation. Why? Seeing how epilepsy has impacted me in just over six years is really hard. I want to help make a change by raising awareness of this challenging and sometimes unforgiving condition.

Epilepsy is a beast. But it’s not stopping me from living my life. If you live with epilepsy, don’t let this ‘beast’ stop you from living your life. **Contact the Epilepsy Foundation. They’re here for you. Hunter”**

We’re here to provide tailored Epilepsy Management or Emergency Medication Plans, easily accessible information and resources, along with epilepsy education and training for every person impacted by epilepsy, like Hunter. If you or someone you know is living with epilepsy, please call our National Epilepsy Support Service on 1300 761 487, email support@epilepsysmart.org.au or visit epilepsyfoundation.org.au.

A New Diagnosis Pathway – A Learning Series for Parents & Carers

In the early stages of their child's epilepsy diagnosis, parents and carers often struggle with understanding the diagnosis, navigating the challenges of managing a chronic condition, and juggling their wellbeing and acceptance of the diagnosis. The Epilepsy Foundation has launched a New Diagnosis Pathway program for parents of children with a new diagnosis of epilepsy.

The program aims to develop a range of virtual and face-to-face group sessions to provide parents and carers with a greater understanding of the challenges when receiving a new diagnosis, key information, and strategies to support themselves and their child during the early stages of their child's diagnosis.

Sessions aim to provide consistent information to all new parents of diagnosed children in an interactive, but non-threatening environment and to feel connected in a community of their peers. Along with information and practical strategies, these sessions will provide a platform for emotional support plus connection with other families.

Facilitated by Epilepsy Advisors, the sessions will balance general information along with small activities providing the opportunity for parents to reflect on and transfer their learnings to their own situation. Our first session "Building Understanding: Starting the Journey" covers Epilepsy & Seizures, The Diagnostic Journey, and Seizure First Aid. Our second session "Living with Epilepsy: Beyond the Seizures" covers Managing Risk, How to Support Your Child to Adjust to Their Diagnosis, Parental Adjustment to A Diagnosis, and Sharing Your Child's Diagnosis.

Currently each session runs monthly. It is advised parents and carers attend both sessions to get the maximum benefit from the program. **For further information and registration details contact the National Epilepsy Support Service on 1300 761 487.**

EPILEPSY FOUNDATION

NEW COURSE LAUNCHED!

Understanding and managing epilepsy for Early Learning Educators

Designed specifically for **Early Learning Educators**, our new course supports educators to confidently and safely care for young children with epilepsy and seizures. The course includes **interactive, early-learning–specific** scenarios to support practical, real-world application. By the end of the course, Early Learning Educators will be able to:

- Identify common seizure types
- Provide appropriate seizure first aid
- Understand the impact of epilepsy on the child
- Interpret and follow Epilepsy Management Plans

If you have a young child with epilepsy or are an Early Learning Educator please contact the Epilepsy Foundation to learn more. Call our National Epilepsy Support Service on 1300 761 487 or visit epilepsyfoundation.org.au/education-and-training.

Wonderful delights await YOU at our Op Shops

It’s not just the amazing array of items you can find... Our volunteers are the backbone of our Op Shops. Ready to welcome you in and help you find that unique vintage item for yourself or your home. Like Matt at our Op Shop in Brunswick.

“I’ve always loved Op Shops and thrift shopping. They’re unique, cozy places filled with really cool, vintage pieces. When the opportunity to volunteer at Epilepsy Foundation’s Op Shop in Brunswick came up, I leapt at it.

I start the day by going through the donation bins, sorting out the items – shoes, DVDs, wedding dresses, a Beatles picture frame, clothes, household items… Every item is inspected, colour coded and tagged ready to be priced, depending on quality and brand. Seeing these beautiful items on display is exciting. They’re really nostalgic and wonderful.”

Our Op Shops are more than a place to shop. Each store is a welcoming space for people to connect, share stories and a laugh, and make new friends. They’re also a place to help raise greater awareness of epilepsy while generating additional funds to support the Foundation’s programs and services.

“I've made lots of friends in my short time working here. And there is a satisfaction in seeing all these beautiful vintage items once owned by people now going back into the community, with proceeds helping to make people's lives better.”

Interested in volunteering at our Op Shops? Then we need YOU!

Our Op Shops rely on the goodwill of people willing to spend a day or two volunteering their time and energy at one of our Op Shops. You don’t need retail or sales background - just a want to help people find that special item in our stores. Apply to be a volunteer by scanning the QR code below. We would love to have you involved!

Where thrift meets purpose – Our Op Shop locations

Discover timeless fashion, quirky homewares, books to lose yourself in, and feel-good finds. Every purchase helps support people living with epilepsy.

BAIRNSDALE - 176 Main Street
BEAUMARIS - 341 Balcombe Road
BLACKBURN - 82 South Parade
BRUNSWICK - 744 Sydney Road
CRANBOURNE – 10 Lurline Street
CROYDON – 104 Main Street
HASTINGS – 10/106 High Street
KILSYTH – 243 Colchester Road
PARKDALE – 258 Como Parade West
SALE – 200 Raymond Street
SEDDON – 142 – 144 Victoria Street
WINDSOR – 84 Chapel Street

Visit epilepsyfoundation.org.au/storelocations for days and times our stores are open.

We Walked. We Talked. We Made an Impact. Walk for Epilepsy 2025.

Walk for Epilepsy 2025 united communities across Australia under the campaign theme **Walk and Talk**, encouraging people to get moving, fundraise and spark meaningful conversations about epilepsy. Throughout October, participants used their steps as an opportunity to raise awareness, reduce stigma and create greater understanding of what it means to live with epilepsy.

The response was inspiring, with **1,277 participants** registering nationally and helping raise an incredible **$601,068** in support of epilepsy services, education and research. Individuals, families, workplaces and community groups all played a role, proving that small actions, when taken together, can have a powerful collective impact.

A standout feature of the campaign was the **Treadmill Challenges**, held in Victoria on 1 October and New South Wales on 14 October. The Victorian challenge brought together 17 teams, while four teams took part in New South Wales. Teams were made up of corporate sponsors, epilepsy service staff, celebrities and noteworthy figures, and healthcare professionals, creating high-energy events that showcased unity, determination and shared purpose.

This year also introduced **Talk the Walk Day** on 7 October, a new initiative that added a personal touch to the campaign. Epilepsy Advisors worked alongside Epilepsy Foundation ambassadors, who surprised participants with phone calls to thank them for their involvement and support. Momentum continued on **Double Donation Day** on 17 October, when donations were matched all day thanks to sponsor support, alongside a takeover of SEN radio featuring powerful interviews with people impacted by epilepsy.

The national Walk for Epilepsy 2025 campaign was proudly supported by ambassadors **Neil Balme, Dr. Emma Foster**, and **Adrian Salvatore**, a client of the Foundation and Australian Special Olympics athlete, as well as sponsors **Nexon Asia Pacific**, **UCB** and **Shop for Shops**. Their collective support helped amplify the campaign's reach and impact, ensuring that the steps taken and conversations started during Walk for Epilepsy 2025 will continue to make a difference long after October.

Yes, I want to help people with epilepsy and their families!

Title: Dr / Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms (please circle)

Name ______________________________

Address ______________________________

____

Suburb ______________________________

State ______________ Postcode ______________

Mobile ______________________________

Email ______________________________

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation

☐ $35 ☐ $50 ☐ $75 ☐ $150 ☐ My choice ________

☐ One Time OR ☐ Monthly

Payment details

☐ My cheque is enclosed payable to Epilepsy Foundation

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Amex

Card Number ________ / ________ / ________ / ________

Name on card ______________________________

Expiry date ________ / ________ CVV ________

Signature ______________________________

Please return in the prepaid envelope provided.
Donations $2 and over are tax deductible.

Visit epilepsyfoundation.org.au/intouch or use our unique QR code to DONATE online.

I would like to find out more about:

☐ Becoming a monthly supporter
☐ Leaving a Gift in my Will to Epilepsy Foundation

EPILEPSY
FOUNDATION

AUT26INT

Post to: Epilepsy Foundation
Reply Paid 69422, SURREY HILLS VIC 3127
You can also donate online at epilepsyfoundation.org.au
OR by calling 1800 437 453

Epilepsy Foundation is committed to protecting your privacy. We collect your personal information so that we can contact you regarding your donations to the Foundation. Epilepsy Foundation and our fundraising staff subscribe to the Fundraising Institute Australia's Code of Professional Fundraising Practice. If you wish to change the way we contact you for future communications please tick the box below or contact Phil Nicholls on 1800 437 453 or email: donations@epilepsyfoundation.org.au

☐ *Please do not send me any further fundraising appeals*

A decision today, a legacy that will live on tomorrow

When a person is told their loved one has epilepsy their lives can become challenging and unpredictable. Caroline's son was just 12 months old when he was diagnosed with epilepsy. Since being told of the diagnosis, Caroline reached out to the Epilepsy Foundation. We have been by their side, as we are for every person living with epilepsy, providing support, information, resources and care.

While Caroline continues to care for her son, who's now approaching his 30s, she has chosen to give back to the Foundation in a most meaningful way. **We hope you may consider joining her by leaving a Gift in your Will.**

"I can make a difference by creating a legacy that will live on. Growing up, I was told it is better to give than to receive. I live by that saying. So as the Foundation has been here for us throughout our journey with epilepsy, I feel it's an opportunity to give back to them, that they can continue to help others with the support, information, education, and training they will need. And perhaps, one day they'll lead the way and discover the cure to this really difficult and challenging condition."

Please consider joining Caroline and leave a Gift in your Will to the Epilepsy Foundation. You can tick the box on the attached donation form, visit epilepsyfoundation.org.au/bequest or call our Bequest Manager on 03 8809 0648 to learn more.